

आधुनिक भारत के निर्माता BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA आधुनिक  
ভারতের স্রষ্টা আধুনিক ভাৰতৰ নিৰ্মাতা আধুনিক ભારતના ધડવેયા અધુનિક  
ಭಾರತದ ನಿರ್ಮಾಪಕರು आधुनिक भारतचे शिल्पकार आधुनिक ଭାରତର

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BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

**Dr. Zakir Hussain**

MAJDA ASAD

ಭಾರತದ ನಿರ್ಮಾಪಕರು आधुनिक भारतचे शिल्पकार आधुनिक ଭାରତର  
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நவபா ரத ச் சிற்பிக ள் நவഭారත നിർമ്മാതാക്കൾ  
ನವ ಭಾರತ ನಿರ್ಮಾತೃಗಳು جدید ہندوستان کے معمار

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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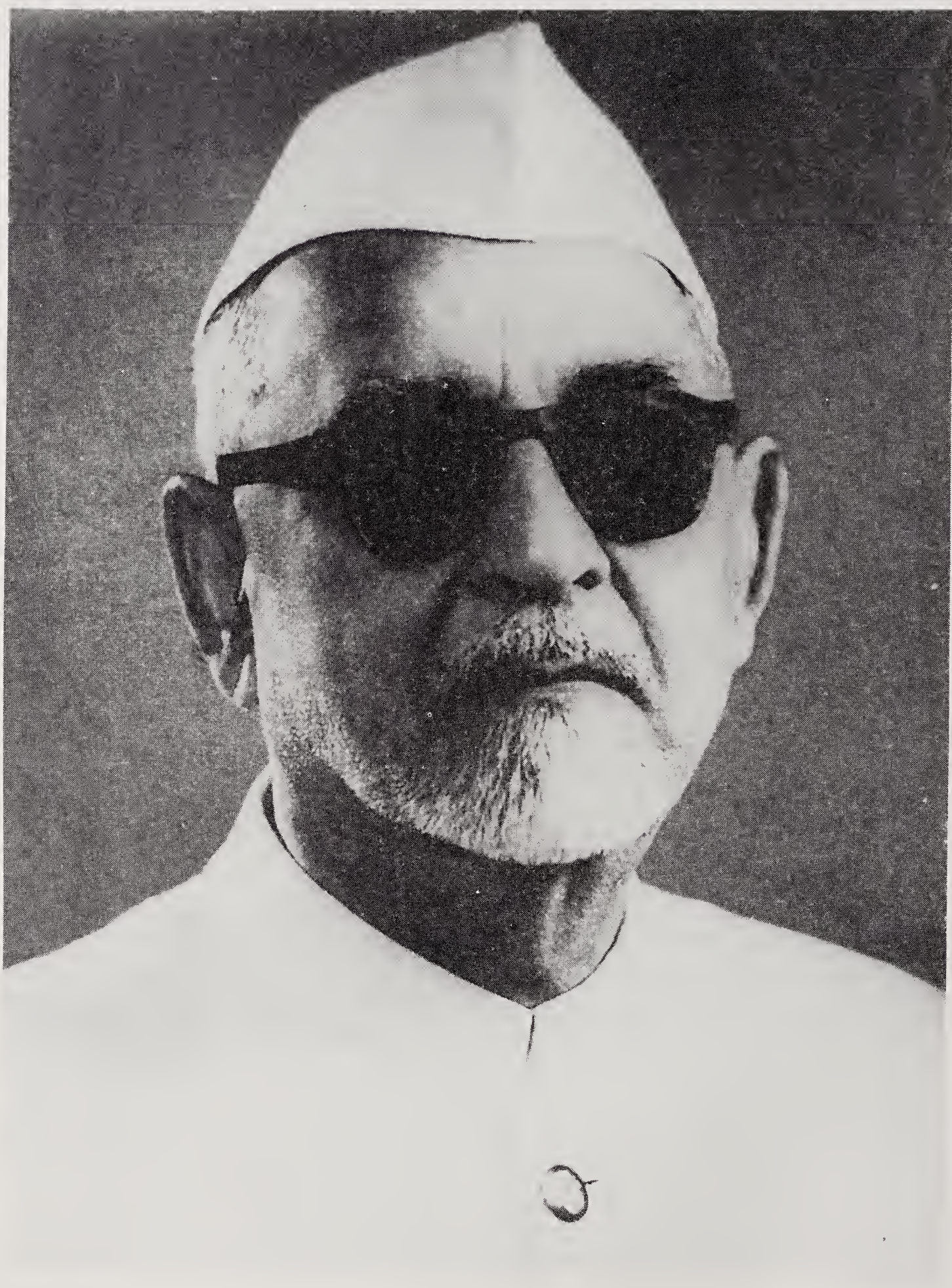
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**DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN**





***BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA***

# **DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN**

By  
**MAJDA ASAD**

Translation  
**Mani Kant Bajpayee**



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## PREFACE

A lot has been written on Zakir Hussain Saheb in Urdu, Hindi and English. Many biographies have also been published. I have gone through a number of them. I have also translated into Hindi “Zakir Sahib Ki Kahani – Unki Beti Ki Zubani” (Zakir Sahib’s story, by his daughter). I don’t claim, I shall be able to say more about him. Nevertheless, when the Publications Division asked me to write the biography of Zakir Sahib, I was overjoyed, I considered my self very fortunate. I was in contact with him from 1962 to 1969. The reason behind this was that I have been enamoured of his personality. He was Vice-president and President while I was just a student, his admirer and full of respect for him.

In fact, I heard the name of Zakir Saheb in my home right from my childhood. My father would often mention about three of his friends of his student life – Professor Habiburrahman, Professor Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui and Dr. Zakir Hussain. He would also narrate interesting incidents about them.

I got myself admitted in M.A. in the Aligarh Muslim University in 1958. At that time Zakir Saheb had already gone to Patna as the Governor of Bihar. While residing in hostel, I happened to hear a number of stories about Zakir Saheb. One of them was that chefs were specially called from Qaimganj to cook food for the marriage feast of Zakir Saheb’s daughter Safia. Some students somehow got hold of the wedding card and got a number of cards printed. These cards were distributed among the students in the hostel. So many students put on white *pyjamas* and black *shervanis* and arrived in the marriage party with cards in their hands. When Zakir Saheb was informed about this he said “let all of them come”. Arrangements were made hurriedly to get food cooked. All the students were respectfully served food like other guests.



I first met Zakir Saheb in 1962 at the Vice-President's house. At that time I was working as Research Assistant in the Urdu Department of Delhi University. Later I got a number of opportunities to meet him. On May 3, 1968 I went to present my published thesis to him, which was dedicated to him. He told me then, "you have given this to me. Now, forget this and continue reading and writing." He also told me, "I want *Riyasat*" (Urdu translation of Plato's 'Republic') to be translated in Hindi. Professor Nagendra was also there. He immediately said, "Delhi University has a Department of translation. I shall get this work done." Zakir Saheb replied, "if this girl says no I shall hand over this work to you." At that time, I could not even think that he would consider me worthy of this important assignment. I said, "Chacha (Uncle), it is my good luck that you considered me worthy of this. I must take up this translation."

The work of translation was assigned to me. Almost half of the book was translated during his lifetime. One by one chapters were sent to him. Despite his busy schedule, he would see them, ask someone to read them to him. At many places he made corrections with his own hand. Exactly one year later, on May 3, 1969 Zakir Saheb passed away. I cannot express in words how his death effected all of us and me. However, the translation was somehow completed and was published as "Plato ki Republic" in 1971.

Whenever I met Zakir Saheb, I happened to have a glimpse of some aspect of the greatness of his personality. I cannot even think that I can also say something about him. Still I have endeavoured to say something. I treat it as tribute, you may take it the way you like.

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## **ANCESTORS AND FAMILY**

**D**istrict Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh, has been the settlement of Pathans. Pathans started settling there in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after coming from Khyber, Kohat etc. Even earlier these areas had been the centers of Pathan population. First of all, Sultan Gyasuddin Balban founded the settlements of the Afghans in 1287 at Patiali (District Eta) and Farrukhabad etc. stretching from Kampal to Atupur on the banks of Ganga. In due course these areas became the stronghold of the Afghan tribes, prior to the Mughals.

### **MUHAMMAD KHAN BANGASH**

In this region, Muhammad Khan of the Bangash tribe, had become known for his bravery and skill in warfare even in his youth. In 1713, the coronation of Farrukhsiar took place. Pleased with the bravery of Muhammad Khan Bangash, he honoured him with 'Char-Hazari Mansab' and granted him a large estate (Jageer) in Bundelkhand. Muhammad Khan Bangash had provided great help to Farrukhsiar and played a major role in installing him as a ruler. The same year Muhammad Khan Bangash founded Qaimganj after the name of his elder son Qaim Khan and Farrukhabad after the name Farrukhsiar. The latter appointed Muhammad Khan Bangash the Governor of Allahabad and Malwa. He also made efforts to bring the Marathas under him, with the help of Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah.

Muhammad Khan Bangash lived upto eighty years of age. He had been a soldier all his life. He had all the characteristics of a soldier in him. The rich and the elite of Delhi who had an element of artificiality in their life-style, could not appreciate the simplicity and life-style of Muhammad Khan Bangash. The self-

respect, life-style and temperament of the Pathans was fully reflected in the personality of Muhammad Khan Bangash. He used to come to his place at Maurshibad on elephant. Once, when he passed through the streets of Maurshibad, the Pathans objected to this by saying that riding on the elephant causes 'exposure' to the women. Bangash Khan immediately got the point. After that, whenever he came, he would dismount from the elephant and entered the township on horse. Any other person could have been offended by this suggestion but he gladly accepted it on the principle of equality.

The slaves of Muhammad Khan Bangash were called disciples (Chela). Kuncha Chelan of Delhi was established after the name 'Chela' (disciples), and is known by this name even today. The bridge, Pul Bangash is also known after the name of Muhammad Khan Bangash. His sons and disciples were very fond of building new townships (ganj). Apart from Qaimganj the townships of Kasganj, Aliganj, Nabiganj, Kamalganj, Islamganj came up during that period.

When Qaimganj was inhabited, Sarhadi (frontier) Pathans kept coming and settling there. Afridi Pathans coming from Khyber and Kohat established their own localities in Qaimganj — Waluli, Koki, Khel Damdama, Kalal Khel, Kabirpur, Saraiyan, Subhanpur, Ghulami, Yahayapur etc. Qaim Khan died in the battle against Ruhelas. After his death his second son Ahmed Khan Bangash succeeded him in 1742 A.D.

## **FAMILY**

A number of Afridi Pathans of Kohat had come to Qaimganj during the time of Muhammad Shah Rangila. Alongwith them, Hussain Khan arrived there with his elder brother Hasan Khan in 1715. Hussain Khan used to teach children and was known as 'Madah Akhoon' (great teacher) because of his learning and qualifications. He continued teaching here also and lived for more than one hundred years. He had so many disciples in Qaimganj and was greatly



respected in his life time. He was a good-hearted Sufi and people took inspiration from him. Even today, people come to his tomb (Mazar) and offer floral tributes. His tomb is located in the old graveyard at Nandu Khan in Qaimganj. Like Pathans 'Madah Akhoon' Hussain Khan's son Ahmed Hussain Khan and his grandson Muhammad Hussain Khan took to sword and adopted the profession of a soldier. They spent most of their years in the royal courts (Rajwadas). Thereafter, they took to agriculture and planted a number of gardens. Ghulam Hussain Khan, the son of Muhammad Hussain Khan was Zakir Saheb's grandfather.

## GHULAM HUSSAIN KHAN

Ghulam Hussain Khan served the army in Deccan contingent. He was one of the colleagues of Afasarul Mulk, who prospered during the period of Mir Mehboob Ali (Nizam of Deccan). Ghulam Hussain Khan enjoyed dignity in the army, but the court life did not suit his saintly nature. So, he returned to Qaimganj from Hyderabad. He was very handsome and had an imposing personality. Truth, simplicity, boldness and frankness were part of his nature. He had equal respect for everyone and great reverence for saints and mendicants (Fakirs and Dervesh). He had great respect for two elderly persons Karam Ali Shah and Bans Behari. Spiritually he was influenced by both of them. Like Kabir Das, Bans Behari maintained friendship and harmony with everybody. He believed that God is one and did not practice idol worship and casteism. He would share food with Muslims and also interact with them. He became very popular among the Pathans because of his liberal views.

Ghulam Hussain Khan was married in Maulkhail. After his marriage, he shifted from Shuklakhail to Maulkhail and started living with his in-laws. He had two sons Atah Hussain and Fida Hussain. Atah Hussain was *Risaldar* in army and had no children.

## FIDA HUSSIAN KHAN

Fida Hussain Khan was born in 1868. He received his education at a District School in Qaimganj and did not take to his ancestral profession of being a soldier. At the age of twenty, he left for Hyderabad with some money from home and started a business of Moradabad utensils in Begam Bazar locality. It was a matter of chance that Afasarul Mulk wanted Ghulam Hussain Khan to live in Hyderabad but he did not stay and went back to his ancestral place in Qaimganj. However, his son Fida Hussain Khan stayed back and settled in Hyderabad not for a job but for business. He was very fond of studies. One day he happened to borrow some law books from his neighbourhood lawyer and this continued for long. He would borrow books, read in his spare time and then return them. Reading those books further triggered a special interest for law books. On the advice of some friends he took the law examination and passed in first class. He left business and started practicing law and figured among the successful lawyers. He left Hyderabad in 1890 and settled in Aurangabad. Alongside legal practice, he launched the publication of *Aain-e-Deccan* (law of the Deccan) and began to publish the judgments of the Hyderabad High Court which fulfilled the much felt need of the lawyers and he also gained financially. He was widely known for his publication.

After gaining name and fame as a lawyer, Fida Hussain Khan again shifted to Hyderabad from Aurangabad. In 1893, he started his office in Begam Bazar and later on purchased a plot there and constructed the press, office and library on the ground floor while he and his family lived on the upper floor. Alongwith *Aain-e-Deccan* other Law books were also printed in his press. In Hyderabad, he was the first and the largest contributor of legal literature to the vendors. The hard work, integrity and commitment of Fida Hussain Khan brought prosperity to his family in Hyderabad. In 1890, he had already got a house built in Qaimganj. His father Ghulam Hussain Khan was still alive.



Fida Hussain Khan was married in Qaimganj. Nabi Dad Khan lived in Kalalkhail locality. Naznin Begam was his younger daughter, to whom Fida Hussain Khan was married. Like her father, Naznin Begam was sober, good-hearted, affable and a firm believer in Almighty. Fida Hussain spent a very happy married life with her.

He had seven sons, Muzaffar Hussain, Abid Hussain, Zakir Hussain, Zahid Hussain, Yusuf Hussain, Jafar Hussain and Mehmood Hussain. Fida Hussain led a life of hard work. He did not pay special attention to his health. Consequently, he fell ill and contracted tuberculosis. He was seriously ill when he came to Qaimganj. In 1907, he breathed his last at the age of 39 in Qaimganj. After his demise his younger brother Atah Hussain sent four of his sons to Etawah for studies. The uncle (Mausa) of the children, Hasan-ud-din Khan looked after them after the death of Atah Khan in 1910.

## NAZNIN BEGAM

The name of Zakir Hussain's mother was Naznin Begam. She was the younger daughter of Nabi Dad Khan, resident of Kalalkhail locality. She had three sisters and no brother. Naznin Begam was affectionately called Bajjo by her mother. She never talked ill of others. She was very gentle. Her goodness, charity and compassion were often talked about by women in Qaimganj. No beggar ever returned empty-handed from her door. She respected everybody she came across. She also treated servants with equality. These qualities of the mother left a deep impact on children also. Like all mothers, Zakir Saheb's was very affectionate to her children. Despite being affectionate to her children, her love for them was not blind. She paid full attention to their education. For studies, she sent them away from her. When she was down with plague she did not inform the children lest their studies would be disrupted. And she passed away with the unfulfilled desire to see her children for the last time.

When the children reached home after hearing the news of mother's death, they found the house locked. In the house, the first victim of plague was the six year old Jagar Hussain Khan, then Zakir Saheb's maternal grandmother and all the servants. The youngest brother Mehmood Hussain Khan was taken away by his aunt to her house. After the death of both the parents, these children had to face a number of problems.

## **BROTHERS**

Muzaffar Hussain Khan, the eldest brother of Zakir Saheb was born in Qaimganj in 1893. His mother took him to Hyderabad in 1894 when he was one year old. He had his early education there. After the death of his father, Muzaffar Hussain Khan was sent to Islamia High School in Etawah for studies. After completing his education there, he went to M.A.O. College, Aligarh for higher studies. After completing his higher education in Aligarh, he started his career in Hyderabad. However, he contracted tuberculosis. He had two sons and a daughter. The daughter's name was Khadija Begam. Later, he became the Principal of Secunderabad College. He expired in 1966. His younger son taught in Aligarh Muslim University and Osmania University, Hyderabad. He had been Professor of Urdu and Linguistics. He had also been Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and would stay at Javed Manzil, Jamia Urdu Road, Aligarh.

Abid Hussain Khan was younger than Muzaffar Hussain Khan. He was considered very intelligent and received education in Etawah High School and M.A.O. College. He was still a student when he contracted tuberculosis and passed away. Zakir Saheb was younger than Abid Hussain Khan. Zahid Hussain Khan was younger than Zakir Saheb. He resembled his grandfather Ghulam Hussain Khan both in looks as well as temperament. He was more handsome than his brothers, healthy and elegant. He was also domineering by nature and was a year and a half younger than Zakir Saheb.



There would be discord between the two over petty matters. Zakir Saheb would restrain him through tact and intelligence. Zahid Hussain Khan also contracted tuberculosis while he was in the first year of intermediate in M.A.O. College, Aligarh. He died at Qaimganj. Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan was younger than Zahid Hussain Khan. He was educated at Etawah Islamia High School, Jamia Millia Islamia and Sirban University, Paris. He had been Professor of History in Osmania University and Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University. Yusuf Hussain Khan had special interest in history and literature. He wrote his autobiography titled *Yadon ki Duniya* (World of Memories). Yusuf Hussain Khan had one son Ajmal Hussain Khan and two daughters Rashda and Mehro. Jafar Hussain Khan was younger than Yusuf Khan who died of plague while their mother was alive. The youngest brother Mehmood Hussain Khan, after completing his education at Jamia, did his P.h.d. from Hydelberg, Germany. He was Professor of History in Dacca University. He was also Vice-Chancellor of Karachi University and Education Minister of Pakistan. He founded an institution on the pattern of Jamia Millia Islamia in Maliyar area in Karachi. The name of his son is Anwar Hussain.

## BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Zakir Hussain was born in Hyderabad on February 8, 1897. His mother looked after him. He imbibed a number of characteristics of his mother. He was a good-hearted person right from his childhood. Whenever, the brothers quarreled, Zakir Saheb wouldn't take much part in the scuffle. He would bring his brothers under control by his tact and intelligence. His younger brother would beat him sometimes. Zakir Saheb would try to avoid quarrel. He would rely more on his intelligence rather than on his physical strength in this. When he was a child, Abdul Ghani Saheb used to come to teach him at home. He worked in the press started by his father. His

main task was that of translation. After Zakir Hussain's mother, it was Abdul Ghani Saheb alone who played the role of a teacher for him. Zakir Saheb thus spent first ten years of his life in Hyderabad.

## WIFE AND CHILDREN

In 1915, Zakir Saheb was studying in Aligarh after having passed High School from Etawah. It was then that his brother got him married. The name of Zakir Saheb's wife was Shahjehan Begam. She was affectionately called Putli Begam at home and was considered beautiful and charming. Pleased with an impressive speech of Zakir Saheb, the grandfather of Shahjehan Begam got Zakir Saheb married to his grand daughter. Shahjehan Begam was very simple, innocent and selfless and observed "Purdah". She was never bothered by the grandeur around, high post or honours. She spent all her life in the service of her husband and children. Looking after the house was her speciality. She always regarded her husband's happiness as her own. She never let her husband worry about the domestic responsibilities. She managed the household expenditure very effectively even with small income. She remained depressed after Zakir Saheb's death. She passed away a few years back.

Zakir Saheb had two daughters Sayeeda and Safia. Sayeeda was married to Khurshid Alam Khan. Safia was married to Zille Rehman Khan, a Professor of Physics in Aligarh Muslim University. Sayeeda has three daughters and a son. Safia has two daughters and a son. This is Zakir Saheb's small family.



# EDUCATION AND CAREER

## EARLY EDUCATION

**Z**akir Saheb had his early education at his home in Hyderabad. He studied Quran Sharif, some Persian books and Urdu at home itself. Abdul Ghani used to come to teach him English. This was the practice in elite Muslim households those days. The children were taught Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English at home. Till the age of ten, Zakir Saheb studied different subjects at home and acquired considerable knowledge. Alongwith his education, Zakir Saheb's mother was particular about building his character. She, therefore, tried to inculcate in him all those qualities, which are essential for a good human being. A child learns his early lessons only from his mother. And this forms the foundation of the edifice built later on, in his life. His mother affectionately taught him so many things and shaped him into a very impressive personality. She knew it was difficult to make proper arrangements for his education in Qaimganj. So she sent Zakir Saheb out to pursue his studies.

Zakir Saheb was sent to the Islamia High School in Etawah for studies. He got admitted in class five in 1907. The Islamia High School was established in 1888. Muslim children were taught Islamic culture and civilisation alongwith English education. It was essential for the students residing in the school hostel to offer Namaz alongwith the Jamait (community). Lifestyle and food for the students were simple. Efforts were made to inculcate in them the habit of leading a hard life. Special attention was paid to discipline. Zakir Saheb was very particular in abiding by the rules and regulations of the hostel. He adhered to offering Namaz too. The rule in the hostel those days provided that the



student who did not offer Namaz, won't be allowed to participate in the games and would even be denied food as a measure of punishment. It happened once that on an occasion, food was not served to students as they had not offered Namaz. The students went on strike. The sense of justice in Zakir Saheb made him feel that it was wrong to skip Namaz but punishment of denying food for this, was unjust as the students had already paid boarding charges. He had not joined the strike, still he offered this argument before the management, in favour of the boys and expressed his sympathy. The point he raised, was logical and weighty enough for the management to review its decision. Since then, this practice was altogether stopped.

In his school days, Zakir Saheb was popular among both schoolmates and teachers. He had interest in studies since the beginning. He used to study text books very attentively. But he used to read books on other subjects as well. His knowledge since childhood was multi-dimensional. It was his hobby to read newspapers and listen to news. He used to go daily to the station, buy newspapers and rush back to the hostel where the students waiting for him would surround him. Zakir Saheb was the youngest in his class. He was made the monitor of the boarding house, because of his prudence. The management was also very happy with him and consulted him on all complicated matters.

Since childhood, Zakir Saheb had command over writing as well as making speeches. He made his point in a manner that those listening to him would accept it. Right since class eight, he would speak in English in debates. Himayat-e-Islam function was held every year and many persons were invited from outside for this. Zakir Saheb used to speak on behalf of the town and his speech was very much liked. Italy and Turkey were at war in those days. Indian Muslims were sympathetic towards Turkey and donations were also collected for them. After Friday Namaz, Zakir Saheb would collect donations from those who

offered Namaz, for the effected people in Turkey. Once he delivered an address in Etawah mosque, and started collecting donations in his Turkish Cap. While accepting donations he said, “gentlemen please donate copper paise in this cap which will change into lead bullets and hit the chest of the enemy.” One grey-bearded elderly person was so impressed by these words that he started crying and emptied his purse into Zakir Saheb’s cap. Everytime substantial amount of money was collected, Zakir Saheb would go to post office and remit the amount for the aid of Turkey by money order.

Zakir Saheb delivered a similar impressive speech in Qaimganj to collect funds. The grandfather of Shahjehan Begam listened to the speech and he also emptied his purse into Zakir Saheb’s cap. At that very moment he also decided to marry his loving grand daughter (Putli) to Zakir Saheb.

Like his speeches, Zakir Saheb’s writings also had magical effect. While studying in Etawah School, he wrote an essay – its title was – ‘Life of a Student’. That article indicated Zakir Saheb’s concept of the nature and objective of student life. He wrote, “a student is one who wants to improve his personality and make himself or his circumstances better than the prevailing circumstances; a student is one who expands his energies to the maximum capacity and the student is one who is keen to know all what he does not know about himself and about the world. In order to be a student, one should be intelligent enough to distinguish between good and evil, loss and gain and between what should be selected and what should be rejected.” On the objective of a student, he further wrote that the aim of student life should be above superstition and favouritism and giving up bad habits. It is his duty to spread literacy among his illiterate brethren and should consider this as part of his education. He should acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge but should not be inattentive to the needs of life. If he ignores worldly needs, he



cannot take care of his family and cannot be useful or beneficial to humanity.

For him this was the touchstone of student life while he was still in class eight. This is imitable and useful for students even today. Narrating an incident of his student life in Etawah, Zakir Saheb said that his teachers had a major role to play in shaping up his character. One day his teacher Altaf Hussain Saheb invited Zakir Saheb and his mates for meal. Water was mixed in the food. When the time for having meal arrived, all his friends, after taking one morsel, angrily stood up, but Zakir Saheb continued having the meal with satisfaction and after his meal he stood up in a way that indicated that he had taken very delicious food. Altaf Hussain was watching all this while keeping himself hidden from the sight of the boys. He then appeared before them, blessed Zakir Saheb and said, "it was to test you all that I mixed water with food deliberately to make it tasteless. I wanted to know who amongst you can sacrifice the pleasure of delicious food. My impression was that Zakir, you would be successful. I am happy, I was correct. I trust, you will be able to make big sacrifices gladly if need be."

This forecast proved right. On his seventy first birth anniversary, Zakir Saheb had said while addressing a meeting, "I owe greatest obligation to my mother. Next to her, comes my teacher late Syed Altaf Hussain." On another occasion, speaking about Altaf Saheb, he said, "I never came across such a person. I never came across more worthy and more affectionate teacher than him. I wonder why such persons are not born now? This world is getting devoid of such people." During his student life in Etawah, Zakir Saheb was very much influenced and inspired by the Headmaster of Etawah School Syed Altaf Hussain and the founder of the School Maulvi Bashiruddin Saheb. Zakir Saheb enjoyed boundless affection of these two persons. Zakir Saheb passed the High School examination from Islamia School of Etawah.



## SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

Hasan Shah, an elderly Sufi was a distant relative of Zakir Saheb's grandfather. During summer vacations, Zakir Saheb used to go to Qaimganj where he would meet Hasan Shah Saheb. He would come in the morning and returned in the evening but will not have meal at Zakir Saheb's home. He would however take tea during the day-time. He was the spiritual guru of Zakir Saheb. Hasan Shah was the disciple of Shah Talib Hussain Farrukhabadi and had since the beginning shown great interest in Zakir Saheb's personality. For the whole day he would keep Zakir Saheb in his company. Hasan Shah was very fond of reading but with his meagre income could not afford to buy books. So whenever he came across books, he would bring them, got them copied and kept them. Most of these books were on Sufism and some on Chemistry and other subjects. He would get them copied by Zakir Saheb and would explain whenever he (Zakir Saheb) faced any difficulty. Thus he would impart spiritual education to him. Copying books helped Zakir Saheb a lot. He acquired fine handwriting and enhanced his knowledge of different subjects. He memorized a number of formula of Chemistry, which helped him a lot later in life. Zakir Saheb had a friend, Ataullah. He was a student of Science and was very fond of doing scientific experiments. Like many other students of Science, he would also experiment to produce gold. Zakir Saheb would bring chemical formula for him with which he experimented. Production of gold remained a distant dream. But the only relief was that coal was constantly burning in Ataullah's room, and his friends prepared tea whenever they desired.

Zakir Saheb had a great reverence for Pir Hasan Shah. It is known about Pir Hasan that he used to discriminate against Hindus to some extent and would sometimes use some improper words also. Religion teaches one to love all. If someone follows his religion without understanding its spirit, he starts hating the followers of other religions. This is the subtle difference between

the truly religious persons and the pretentious and bigoted ones. One gives importance to principles and values and the other treats pretensions and customs as religion. Hasan Saheb's religious guru Pir Talib Hussain Saheb also came to know of all this. He called Hasan Saheb and told him – "Hasan Shah your heart is not fully pure. One who believes in God is left with no scope of hatred in his heart for His creation. The remedy is that you travel from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari with a lock of hair (Choti) on your head and tilak (auspicious mark on forehead) so that more and more people see you in this condition and you get educated. Pir Hasan Shah bowed his head before his guru's order and travelled according to his instructions. After this, he was so used to travelling that whenever he liked, he would leave with a bundle of clothes and books. When he became old, he got a four-wheeler cart ready and would keep his bundle of clothes and books in it. Once when Zakir Saheb was ill, he would come every day in the morning to collect his urine sample to take it to Hakim (Doctor) Ahmed Sher Khan who lived three-fourth of a mile away in Subhanpur. Sometimes he would give money to Zakir Saheb to hand it over to some poor man in a nearby locality and at times he would send money to some widow. He would explain to Zakir Saheb the meaning of the books on Sufism while getting them copied. He brought forth the spiritual side in Zakir Saheb and imparted moral education to him.

Zakir Saheb had in him the seed of moral values and the qualities of a saint in him at a very early age. Hasan Shah developed it fully. It was because of Hasan Shah that Zakir Saheb had great reverence for Sufis and elderly persons. Love for human beings was the most important that Zakir Saheb learnt from the teachings of the Sufis. In love, there is no distinction on the basis of religion and caste, colour and race. Charity, renouncing the feeling of discrimination, affection and respect are virtues which bring all together. Zakir Saheb gave high importance to humanity. He was completely a spiritual person.



In one of his speeches, Zakir Saheb, referring to the elderly sufi said, “while I was being taken care of by Altaf Hussain, one elderly sufi Hasan Shah Saheb took over the task of teaching me good manners, etiquette and culture with all care and affection no less than that of a mother. He showed me the right path at a time when life starts moulding itself in a rigid frame. I regret that I had the fortune of being in his service for some eight to nine months only out of the total three years. Thereafter, he passed away. Had I not been in this pious company, my life could have been different. His memory is still a source of inspiration to me.” Possibly this was the influence of the elderly sufi Hasan Shah that wherever he lived, he exhibited the glimpses of spirituality. This remained so throughout his life. Therefore he is supposed to have said, “kindly pray that I spend my time in Raj Bhawan like a Darvesh, and remain free from illusion and attachment (Maya and Moh) and remain vigilant and god fearing .... Only Fakirs should live in Raj Bhawan. The real thing is attachment to God, (Allah)”.

## COLLEGE EDUCATION

After having passed the matriculation examination in 1913, Zakir Saheb took admission in intermediate science in M.A.O. College, Aligarh. His brother wanted him to be a doctor. After his intermediate examination in 1915, when he was admitted to Christian College, Lucknow for his studies in medicine, he fell ill. Then he dropped the idea of studying medicine and got himself admitted to B.A. on his return to Aligarh the following year. He passed B.A. examination in first class in 1918, with English Literature, Philosophy and Economics. Apart from the course books, Zakir Hussain would read more and more the other books available to him. He then sought admission to M.A. in Economic. Simultaneously he got himself admitted to L.L.B. course.

Zakir Saheb was a talented student. He stood first thrice in annual examinations in his school. While in school, he already



had good practice of writing and delivering speeches. He became popular in Aligarh very soon because of his nature and personality. All students and teachers had high opinion of him because of his talent, ability and high character. His friends would call him guru. He was so talented that he would remember the book even if he came across it once. He never had to labour hard for his examinations. All over the year, he was engaged in many activities in college. He would study when examination drew near. When results were declared he would stand first in the class and those who studied for the whole year lagged behind. Some issues of the college magazine “Aligarh Monthly” suggest that he was a good student of science. The March 1915 issue mentioned that he got scholarship in science and also received the honour of Junior Prize Scholar. The list of prize winners for 1913-14 published in the aforesaid issue mentions below the first year science sub titles—

First all round	—	Zakir Hussain Khan
First in English	—	Zakir Hussain Khan
First in Physics	—	Zakir Hussain Khan

Similarly, among the arts students also he excelled. He had deep interest in Economics. The January – February 1918 issue of “Aligarh Monthly” mentioned that the list of students awarded in 1917 included the name Zakir Saheb. He was declared an excellent student of Economics. In 1918 B.A. final examination of the University he was honoured with Iqbal Medal. Zakir Hussain used to remain busy in hostel management etc. and in 1917, he was the senior proctorial monitor of S.S. East Hostel. He was also awarded “Sunni Diniyat” for regularly offering Namaz and better presence in Jamait.

Zakir Saheb was much sought after either for representing any of the students’ movements or heading any of the groups keeping forth the student’s demands. It was interesting that the responsible officials of the college had also full faith in Zakir Saheb. He enjoyed equal trust of both his friends as well as

college officials. Referring to him, his friend Prof. Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui has written in “Zakir Saheb”, “a group of students went to Saheb Bagh and requested Zakir Saheb to lead them. Zakir Saheb left with them. His whereabouts were not known for three-four days. One day he met in the study hall of the union. I asked him, “how was it?” He said, “it was all right.” I said, “what about studies?” He said, “I was totally involved in this disturbance, I must reap the consequences. God saved me from you.” I asked, “what about food?” He said, “those who worked for the country never starved but have often died of cholera.” When I was leaving, he confronted me by asking, “for God’s sake please accept my advice.” I asked, “what is that? Should we go to Delhi?” I was bored and told Zakir Saheb, to come to his senses. Examination was knocking at the door. He evaded my advice in such a way that showed it had no importance. He started saying – “what is the use of further studies, you have studied enough to earn your livelihood. B.A. is enough to impress the fools. We have to cultivate the habit of conversing with gentlemen and for this, it is necessary to go to Delhi.” I did not agree. Zakir Saheb also did not go to Delhi and was seen only eating or talking here and there in the college. Zakir Saheb was again in Saheb Bagh three or four days before the examination. We welcomed him as if he had come back after losing everything and deserved our sympathy and he met as if he had forgiven all our wrongs. Examination was held, result was out, we all failed, only Zakir Saheb passed. Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui writes in “Mazamin-e-Rashid” about Zakir Saheb – “Murshid had always low attendance but would pass with high marks. He was among the very powerful speakers of the union. Kurta, Pyjama and beared, Shervani-Hyderabadi Shervani for meals in dining hall and breakfast at others’ expense and medicines from Delhi. Murshid always feared that his life was in danger and this anxiety led him to be in touch with all the doctors nearby. He would go to Delhi to see all types of doctors and would bring medicines prescribed by them with great caution and formality.



He would buy all medicines – Allopathic, Unani and Ayurvedic. He would also bring all kinds of fruits and sweets from Delhi. At every station on the way he would purchase something from hawkers and would bring them also. After reaching the boarding house, he would invite all to share the eatables on the conditions that those who join would also have to take medicine.”

Zakir Saheb was a very good orator right from his school days. He used to participate and speak in all meetings and competitions organised by the students union. He had an equal command on both Urdu and English language. He often stood first in debating competitions. He also received a number of prizes. Later came a time when he became famous as a debator in Aligarh. It was a treat to watch him reply at debate competitions. He would spot the loop-holes in the arguments of his opponents and would refute them dramatically. Listeners were just amazed and the atmosphere was filled with laughter. As soon as he started speaking, his talent would come to the fore and his supporters would cheer him up. The opposition also could not stand up to his arguments. While speaking he used to create an atmosphere of curiosity for a long time. In 1917-18 election of the union, Zakir Saheb was a candidate for the post of Vice-President. Then came the day of making speeches according to the tradition of the Aligarh Union. Zakir Saheb's opponents published that a particular professor had prepared his speech and he was just busy cramming it. When his turn came, he appeared on the dias and said “I introduce the subject before the house and whatever I have to say I will do so only while replying. Opponents were happy while supporters were full of anxiety. There was commotion in the hall. Speakers from the opposition spoke whatever they wanted to for Zakir Saheb and his supporters. Zakir Saheb again came to the dias at the time of reply. His supporters were all alert. Zakir Saheb said that he would not make any argument on the subject instead, he would just reply to whatever the opponents had earlier spoken. He also went on to comment on the dignity, manner and style of their



speeches. Listeners were vociferous in their admiration. It seemed that some great poet was reciting his best poems. Once the speech was over, opinion was sought and it was found that the entire gathering in the hall was in favour of Zakir Saheb. Thus Zakir Saheb was selected the Vice-President of the union.

## **TRANSLATOR AND WRITER**

Along with his studies and the activities of the union, the literary activities of Zakir Saheb also continued. As an intermediate student in 1915, Zakir Saheb translated an English article of Prof. Brown under the caption 'Boby Mazhab' which was published in a magazine in Lucknow. Zakir Saheb translated Plato's "Republic" in Urdu under the title "Riyasat". This translation was so good that the renowned student of the time, Maulana Iqbal Hussain, said about it that if Plato knew Urdu he would have adopted this very language. Zakir Saheb used to write articles in the name of "Rep" in Aligarh magazine on life and activities of the college. Zakir Saheb's article "Eternity or Toy", published in Aligarh magazine in March-August issue in 1920 has special significance. The pro-Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University Rims Botham stated that Zakir Saheb's writings and speeches in English, specially his ready wit could be compared with the outstanding members of the British Parliament. After doing his B.A. Zakir Saheb got admission in M.A. Economics. He was appointed Junior Lecturer or Student Lecturer in 1920 i.e. in the last year of his post graduate studies.

## **INFLUENCE OF GANDHIJI**

In 1920, a number of movements were launched in the country. Of them, Khilafat movement, Non-Co-operation movement and Swadeshi movement were very important. The leaders of the country decided to boycott foreign goods. After the First World War, when the British put an end to the Khilafat in Turkey, anger and hatred spread against the Britishers in the whole Islamic World especially in India. Great leaders like Maulana Mohammed Ali Jauhar, Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul

Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan had joined the movement. Strikes, protests and processions were organised all over the country. The massacre of Jalianwala Bagh had shaken everybody. Martial law was imposed in Punjab. Mass movement was in full swing. Anger had further aggravated among the Muslims because of Khilafat having been put to an end in Turkey. The British Government was not fulfilling its promises made to Turkey after the war. The Indian Muslims felt weakening of Turkey was weakening of Khilafat. Khilafat Conference was organised at this point and it was decided to save Khilafat. At this moment Gandhiji not only supported Khilafat but also fully prepared the Congress in favour of Khilafat. There was a string of unity all around the country. The countrymen's mind was all set to see their country free from foreign yolk. When Gandhiji started Non co-operation movement, the Muslims co-operated with their heart and soul. This further strengthened Gandhiji's Non-co-operation movement. Both the Hindus and Muslims joined the campaign to throw the British out of the country. Gandhiji visited the colleges, universities and schools all over the country. He inspired students to boycott government Institutions.

All the political streams in the country merged at a single point on the firm foundation of anti-British feelings. All these activities also influenced the students of Aligarh college. Students in this college were divided into two camps. Hakim Ajmal Khan, Ali Brothers and their colleagues wrote to college management to stop accepting financial aid from the government and to boycott aid-giving institutions. They reiterated their stand at the function of the members of the court of Aligarh college but this had no impact. The appeal was brought to the notice of the students. When the students supporting Khilafat movement invited national leaders on behalf of the Union Club, Mahatma Gandhi, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Ali Brothers and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad came to Aligarh. They talked to students on their arrival in Aligarh. The trustees of the college were infuriated.



When the Principal failed in his efforts, he called a conference of the parents so that the supporters of Khilafat abandoned the college, but no one moved. However, the enthusiasm could not be watered down. The union organised a function. Gandhiji addressed the union meeting and the students were very much impressed. Many students decided to leave government institutions on Gandhiji's call. The union meeting was also addressed by both Ali brothers Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali. This left a deep impression on the students. Many of them were prepared to leave the university.

The college students were already divided in two groups. The group supporting the Khilafat was in great dilemma. Somebody said in this meeting that if they left this institution and those who were asking them to do so should make arrangements for their proper education. Zakir Saheb was very much impressed by this movement. He totally supported Gandhiji. He welcomed Gandhiji's utterances from the core of his heart and was ready to translate it into action. Dr. Ziauddin, the then Vice-Chancellor thought that if he could convince Zakir Saheb to be on his side, then other students won't leave the university because Zakir Saheb's words were equally important for students as well as teachers. Ziauddin Saheb tried to make Zakir Saheb understand that he should not spoil his career by involving himself in this futile controversy. If he isolated himself from this, he could be offered some high post like that of Deputy Collector soon. A big problem arose before Zakir Saheb. But he soon decided to leave Aligarh. Non co-operation movement and Khilafat movement were successful in Aligarh. The British government got very upset and was furious. This movement had great impact on the educational institution of Aligarh. Along with this movement proposal to set up a National University along with community, national and social institutions were also placed before the leaders.

Then the question arose as to where should the students who had not completed their education and still left the college,



study. Zakir Saheb went to Delhi in this connection and met Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Mohammed Ali and other leaders. It was finalized that if a national educational institute was set up many students and teachers were ready to leave Aligarh. These leaders welcomed the proposal and promised to set up such an institution. Many patriots left M.A.O. College, Aligarh and thus a new institution called Jamia Millia Islamia was founded.

# JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, ALIGARH

## BACKGROUND

Zakir Saheb's article in English published under the title "Eternity or Toy", was important in so many respects. That was the time when the movement of the Muslim university was at its zenith. There was awakening and enthusiasm among Muslims. In this article, certain observations regarding the principles of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and some later leaders were made. This article facilitates better understanding of the sense of patriotism, educational policy and the thought process of Zakir Saheb. He was of 23 years then but unlike his younger colleagues he had more self-respect and had realistic ideas about the rise and fall of Islam in India. In this article, while acknowledging the services of Sir Syed, he pointed out the weaknesses of his principles and practices and the incomplete success of Aligarh movement. Almost all, especially the vigilant ones, were already disappointed about the success of the Aligarh movement. Now, the question was how to convert the M.A.O. College into a university, what should be the form and organisation of the university, what should be its basic objectives and to fulfill them what subjects be included in the courses of study and what subjects be prescribed as extra curricular. Zakir Saheb was watching the situation and was observing that the leaders running the M.A.O. College were so insensitive that they were not working on something concrete and fruitful, even for short term what to talk of long term vision. They wanted immediately a university just for name sake, it mattered little to them whether it fulfilled the desire of the Muslims for renaissance or not. Sir Syed wanted to pave the way for religious, social and economic reforms and development through

the spread of education among Muslims. Perhaps he also felt that education will bring political awakening amongst Muslims but he had a grudge against Sir Syed that he had bargained the great objective for much less and what he got was just a college which had been producing clerks and officials for the British Administration in the enslaved India. He has written in great detail in this regard.

Zakir Saheb also accepted that Sir Syed and some of his colleagues struggled with great courage to eradicate the wrong practices prevalent in the Muslim society and made constant efforts to change their attitude towards religion. However, their endeavour did not succeed fully. The magazine 'Tahajibul Akhalaq' was closed. Sir Syed always laid stress on the fact that education should be away from politics. The mentors of the Aligarh Movement reiterated the same time and again. Perhaps, keeping this in mind and to review the developments in the changing circumstances, Zakir Saheb said, "Time has now come for us to introspect, to review the work done in the past and to determine objectives for the future. As a clear objective was necessary for concrete education policy, this objective should be clear and without doubts because when an idea is converted into action, there should be no scope of any compromise in that process. So the question that arises clearly is what type of work force will be required for India 10 to 15 years down the line. If there is no such objective for the national needs or for the building of the destiny of the country, education will remain a lifeless machine and when we are determining such an objective after deliberate consideration, we should remain conscious that the objective should not be common and mediocre. A low level objective may sometimes be the cause of disrespect and fall. We should consciously ensure that eternity is not sold in exchange for a toy.

Muslims were never satisfied with the education system formulated by the British Government. They wanted the



education of children and youth in their hands. Sir Syed set up M.A.O. College but his dream could not be fulfilled completely and he had a feeling till the end that the college was meeting only topical requirements. Sir Syed could not have done anything more in view of the circumstances in which the college was set up.

In fact Sir Syed wanted to see the education of the Muslims, free from Government interference. He knew well that unless the education of Muslims remained in government hands they won't be fully benefited. The plan of education for Muslims published in 1873 by Syed Mehmood was the expression of the ideas of his father Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. It was stated in the plan: if we rely on the government for our requirements which are related to our personal things (education etc.), it is impossible to attain such an objective. In Europe, excellent knowledge centers are completely free from the government interference. It is almost impossible that the British Government would appreciate our requirements related to education and training.

After the death of Sir Syed, the movement for Muslim university started and progressed gradually. By 1911, the movement had gain great momentum. On the other hand, MAO college prospered and reached a stage when it could be easily termed a university. The general feeling at that time was that the Muslim university would be an independent university and completely free from the interference of the government. But soon it became clear that the government was not prepared for this. This led to restlessness among the Muslims and an atmosphere of agitation emerged in the country. They started thinking that when the government was not ready to give such a university to the Muslims, the Aligarh college itself should be converted into All India Muslim University through which arrangement for all kinds of education be made. Muslims themselves should set up a National University for the Indian Muslims. The capital earmarked for the Muslim university should be handed over to this university.

One of the reasons of the failure of the Muslim university movement in 1912-13 was also that after Sir Syed, the differences between the students, secretary and the European (English) staff went on deepening. The major reason for awakening and national pride of Muslims was the spread of modern education which led to the clash between the feeling of superiority of the English and that of the feeling of Muslims. In 1908, there was revolution in Turkey under the leadership of young Turks (unity and prosperity union). The Indian Muslims had special affinity with them. The news of political activities of youth in Turkey, Iran and Egypt reached Indian youth through newspapers and that inculcated in them courage for struggle in life with self-confidence and pride. With the end of the world-war, the spirit of nationalism got a big boost along with Khilafat movement. The slogan of national movement of Gandhiji spread all over the country. Gandhiji came to Aligarh and explained his ideas to the students. Ali brothers were in Aligarh and after detailed talks, it was decided to set up some new institutions.

## **ESTABLISHMENT**

It was on October 29, 1920 (Safar 16, 1339 Hizri, Friday) that an independent national institution Jamia Millia Islamia was established in Aligarh. On this auspicious occasion Hazrat Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahamudul Hasan was invited from Deoband. The foundation stone of this national institution was laid in the big mosque of Aligarh college and Shabbir Usmani, the disciple of Maulana Mohamudul Hasan Saheb read his speech because Maulana was very weak. "Oh! The children of the country! When I realised that those who share my heart-felt pain are fewer in number at madrasas and khankahas as compared to schools and colleges, then I alongwith my friends who believe in selfless service took a step towards Aligarh — and that is how two historical places of the country — Deoband and Aligarh were tied together.



I should applaud the boldness of the boys more than the efforts of the leaders - the boys, who for fulfilling the sacred objective and for the realization of their hopes withstood all kinds of temptations and fears and stood firm in non-co-operation with the Christians (English) and dedicated their lives for the sake of the nation and the community." About Jamia, Shaikhul Hind said, "The education of Muslims should be in the hands of the Muslims and should be completely free from the influence of the others. Also we should feel free in following our faith and maintaining our thoughts, morality and conduct. Now, the decision of our great country should not be to produce very cheap slaves from our colleges. For our colleges the role model should be Baghdad and Kartaba Universities which made Europe their disciple before we would have made them our guru."

The formal inauguration of the Jamia Millia Islamia took place in the mosque of the Aligarh College but it was not clear at that time who among the students were from Jamia and who others from the MAO College. All the students lived together. This situation could not be allowed to drag on for long. The secretary of the college was Syed Mohammad Ali, a supporter of the British Government. He got it printed in newspapers on October 30, "Maulana Mohammad Ali had forcibly opened some rooms of the college buildings and had started admission for the National University. I have given him notice that he should leave the college premises by 3.30 p.m. in the afternoon and should not hold any meeting in the college." Maulana Mohammed Ali who was staying in the Old Boy's Lodge, did not take notice of this, because the former wanted MAO College to be converted into the National University. The British Government created such a situation at that time that the latter had to leave the college.

This caravan of the Jamia Millia Islamia came out of the college premises after leaving the grand buildings of the Aligarh College and camped in the two buildings that were hired and the



tents which were somehow made available by Hakim Ajmal Khan. Thus a new chapter was added in the history of education of Indian Muslims – a chapter written by the teachers and students of the Jamia from the core of their hearts and this became an example of selfless service, dedication and sacrifice while following the high ideals of national education and nation building during that period.

This caravan left in the morning through the gate between the college mosque and the pacca barracks and arrived at its first destination. There was no arrangement for food there. By noon, the people of Aligarh town avoiding the police arrived there with food in push carts and bullock carts. This continued till there was a permanent arrangement for food. Initially, these persons had to face a number of difficulties. For months, situation in Jamia was such that it was called the camp of Khilafat and non-cooperation movement. In November, a new system was evolved for the management of Jamia and running of educational activities. A board of trustees Majlis-e-Muntjima (Executive Committee) and Majlis-e-Talim (Education Committee) was constituted. Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected Chancellor (Amir-e-Jamia), Maulana Mohammad Ali, Vice Chancellor (Shaikhul Jamia), Haji Musa Khan Honorary Secretary of the Establishment Committee and Maulavi Anwarul Huda and Tasadduk Ahmed Khan Shervani were elected as Joint secretaries. Abdul Majeed Khwaja was appointed the Principal of the College. Classes were yet held on regular basis. Students of senior classes used to teach junior students. Whenever, any leader of Khilafat or non co-operation movement was invited or visited on his own they would arrange for his speech. Lectures and seminars were continuously being organized and this resulted in a lot of activities. Almost for a year, the situation continued like this. Senior Students had to attend the first six-weeks course, wherein they were explained the aims and objectives and principles of the Khilafat and non co-

operation movements. Later, these students were sent as members of delegations to various parts of the country for publicizing and spreading the Khilafat and non co-operation movements.

Zakir Saheb always remained with Maulana Mohammed Ali in hours of difficulty. He would share his work in addition to his study and teaching. A hand written journal "Al Rashid" which was later launched in the name of "Jauhar", represented the unity of the students.

Zakir Saheb's contribution had special significance in building the Jamia. The first two years were spent in intense struggle. Whenever Maulana Mohammed Ali went to jail because of his political activities, Zakir Saheb's responsibility would increase manifold.

The first convocation of Jamia was held on 8 December 1921, which was presided over by Hakim Ajmal Khan. During the second convocation the noted scientist P.C. Roy in his convocation address said that love of learning and truth was part of the soul of the Islam. Jamia continued to function from Aligarh for a number of years.

## **HOURS OF CRISIS**

About two years later, Khilafat movement failed. The enthusiasm of the people who were associated with Jamia gradually waned and they abandoned the movement. Hakim Ajmal Khan ran from pillar to post. Meeting of the foundation committee was held in Sharif Manzil. When there was no way in sight to solve the crisis Gandhiji was consulted. Gandhiji said Jamia had to run at any cost and if there was problem of fund, he would beg for it. Hakim Saheb felt encouraged and found the longed for cooperation of Gandhiji in that hour of crisis. Zakir Saheb had to go to Germany for higher studies. Zakir Saheb was a very active worker of this institution. He would mingle with both the students as well as the teachers. Now he had to leave



Jamia and part with his friends for some time. He had been planning for a long time to go for higher studies in Economics. But, it was only now that he got the opportunity to do so. Zakir Saheb was parting with his friends and institution after working for two years in Jamia. His friends bid him farewell with a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow. Zakir Saheb arrived in Germany in September 1922. Gandhiji had withdrawn the non-cooperation movement in early 1922. There was an atmosphere of disappointment in the country because of political upheaval. The situation had become aggravated with the end of the Khilafat movement in 1924. Maulana Mohammed Ali was very upset. There was no sense in continuing the Khilafat Committee after the Khilafat coming to an end. Of the two special movements which led to the establishment of the Jamia Millia Islamia the Khilafat Movement almost came to an end and the non-cooperation movement was becoming almost lifeless. The crises of the Jamia could well be imagined in this situation. Jamia was being run by financial cooperation of the Khilafat Committee. The income of the Khilafat Committee gradually became less and then completely nil. Now the Jamia had no source of income. Most of its trustees had lost courage after the failure of the National Movement. People started talking of its closure.

Maulana Mohammed had actually dreamt of making Aligarh College a National University. Now the situation had changed. It seemed difficult to run the Jamia. However, the leaders like Gandhiji, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and Abdul Majeed Khwaja had fully understood the importance of an independent educational institution like Jamia Millia. It was there heart felt desire that Jamia should not be closed down. This should continue to see the path of progress. In addition, the teachers, students and workers also wanted to see the plant they had nurtured survive with their sweat and blood, and bear fruit. They remembered Zakir Saheb at this hour of



crises. Telegram was sent to inform him that the foundation committee was intending to close the Jamia Millia Islamia. Zakir Saheb replied, "A handful of my friends and I are ready to devote their lives in the service of the Jamia. Please don't allow it to be closed till we return."

Zakir Saheb happened to meet Mujib Saheb and Abid Saheb in Germany itself. Both of them were fully prepared to serve the Jamia along with Zakir Saheb. A delegation met Hakim Ajmal Khan with the reply of Zakir Saheb and requested him not to let Jamia close down till the return of Zakir Saheb. Hakim Saheb sent those students to Aligarh after convincing them and called the meeting of the foundation committee in the Sharif Manzil. Gandhiji was present in meeting of January 29, 1925. He encouraged Hakim Saheb and said – "Jamia will have to be run at all cost."

Hakim Saheb got this resolution passed by the foundation committee on March 11, 1925 that Jamia should be shifted to Delhi from Aligarh. The Vice Chancellor (Shaikhul Jamia) Abdul Majid Khwaja was told that he should make arrangements for shifting Jamia to Delhi. It was decided to commence the academic session of 1925-26 in Delhi. Some bungalows adjacent to Tibbia College in Delhi were hired on rent and Jamia was thus shifted to Delhi. Teaching for the next session commenced.

## VISIT TO GERMANY

Zakir Saheb boarded the ship at Bombay (now Mumbai) and got down at the Tryst Port. Therefrom, he went to Germany via Austria. His idea was to do his Ph. D in Economics. In Berlin University itself, there was an institute for foreigners. Zakir Saheb first got himself admitted in the language course. In 1923, he got admission in Ph. D at Berlin University. Zakir Saheb was in Germany for about three and a quarter years. This was a very important period for him from the point of view of mental and educational development. Even otherwise, Zakir Saheb had interest in all aspects of education, civilization and culture and he gained a lot in this respect. Zakir Saheb met Abid Saheb and Mujib Saheb there itself. All the three became very good friends. It was difficult to find out how much attention Zakir Saheb gave to various other things. Zakir Saheb did various other things also while studying for Ph. D. He also learned composing in Kadiyani Press of Berlin and published a beautiful pocket edition of 'Diwan-e-Ghalib' which is considered unique and attractive even today. This press of Berlin was very famous for modern Persian and oriental studies. The Persian script type of the press was very beautiful. May be this inspired Zakir Saheb to learn composing. The expenditure incurred for the preparation of this edition of 'Diwan-e-Ghalib' was met jointly by all the three Zakir Saheb, Abid Saheb and Mujib Saheb. They thought when this edition of Ghalib's *Diwan* would reach India, copies would be sold soon and they would receive their money through Maktaba Jamia. However, they had a number of problems in receiving the money back. They had also to wait for long. But as soon as they were paid back they embarked upon a new scheme to publish a book on Gandhiji in German language.

From Germany, Zakir Saheb wrote letters to his friends. These letters give an inkling of the influence of German life on Zakir Saheb. He completed his research work with great devotion and hard work and got Ph. D. degree. He gained a lot from Professor of Economics, Sombart. He was a great philosopher and thinker of his times. Simultaneously Zakir Saheb was in constant touch with another scholar Edward Springer. This proved to be very beneficial for him. Sombart made deep impact on Zakir Saheb's personality. This also influenced his thinking. Books written by Zakir Saheb on Economics are the outcome of his inspiration. Zakir Saheb gained a lot in Germany and taking pride in that he said, "if I have pride in this, please excuse me. I am grateful to a German University for the development of mind and character."

While studying in the Berlin University, Zakir Saheb happened to meet Prof. Springer, a great scholar of his time. He was one of the great scholars of education and culture in the Berlin University. Zakir Saheb was very much inspired and encouraged by him and studied his ideas and listened to his lectures. Zakir Saheb himself was a connoisseur of literature and education. He never depended on text books alone. He perceived the society and culture in a very subtle manner and understood them. He made use of those things in his thought and teaching. He had his own views on education, specially the education of the Muslims. Springer's subtle outlook influenced Zakir Saheb in respect of depth in thinking, morality in cultural life, quest of spiritual values, simplicity and modesty. A new chapter was added to Zakir Saheb's thinking after being influenced by them.

Zakir Saheb had been to Germany for specialised studies in Economics. However, his interest in education system remained so deep as if his visit was meant only to acquire knowledge of contemporary teaching and educational experiments. He was deeply engrossed in the study of the books by Kerschensteiner.



He read the works of other scholars too. The experiments made in the field of education had no special significance in Germany nor was the contemporary political atmosphere conducive for them. However, the supporters of experiments and practices in the field of education stood firm despite the stern attitude of the then German Government and opposition from the country's upper class. They were peacefully preparing favourable grounds for reforms in schools. A school supervisor Dr. George Kerschensteiner in Munich was one of them. He was engaged in giving new form to education system and text books management, right since 1880, so that in practice, the education plan could be transformed into creative education. The basis of his principles were the new requirements of the scientific age. He was of the view that only classics for senior classes in schools and the command and obey system for junior classes were very much against the practical and experimental concepts. Material civilisation was developing fast. It had become essential to change the teaching system in schools. Man was getting increasingly aware about Nature. Therefore man was getting bold enough because of his increasing control over natural forces and he wished to have more freedom for himself. He had started seeking more freedom for the individual. In old fashioned school, students were simply taught. In the new schools of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, students wanted their needs and importance to be recognized. An individual is a living entity and he has his own unique temperament and disposition. From this point of view, his activities should be seen in a particular typical manner. According to Kerschensteiner's Principle, efforts were made to solve the impending problems keeping in mind five characteristics of human nature. These five characteristics are physical, mental, social, aesthetic and moral. The standard set by the school for morality was not related directly to religious faith. Good conduct was treated as an important basis of spiritual values. This line of thinking was considered essential for the existence of democracy.

That was the reason why according to the German educationists of the time the task of the school was to orient the children with the help of experiments which should fully absorb their mind and brain. Character building of the children should be resorted to and they should be given fully liberty. Development of man's conduct and his creativity was possible only in a liberal environment. Children should be initiated into a habit of living together and creating an amiable society. In this teaching method children got ample opportunity to develop their creative energies to the full. The atmosphere was quite appropriate for the development of personality through experiments. After his return from Germany, Zakir Saheb made Jamia Millia Islamia a laboratory of Kerschenstainer's experiment and was also fully successful in this endeavour.

## **VISIT TO DENMARK, SWEDEN AND NORWAY**

Zakir Saheb was greatly interested in acquiring new and latest information and knowledge. He constantly tried to acquire information about various objects and subjects and for this, he at times, would be missing from his hostel room in Aligarh. When Zakir Saheb was staying with the Schwaner Family in Germany, one person named Petersen was there as a guest for sometime. Zakir Saheb made friends with him. He had a rich experience of animal husbandry and dairy farm management and Zakir Saheb talked to him and got interested in this field also. He thought of visiting these countries with Petersen. None of the two gave thought to the expenses going to be incurred on this visit and how these expenses would be met. Both left with the feeling of facing the situation as it came. Zakir Saheb left with Petersen in October 1924 for Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Prof. Mujib had written in detail about this visit of Zakir Saheb in his book. When they ran short of money during the journey Petersen suggested Zakir Saheb to write a long article on Gandhiji. If some newspaper published it, all the expenses of the journey could be met. Zakir Saheb wrote a long article. Petersen



translated it and the same was published in a newspaper along with the photograph of Zakir Saheb. The remuneration of the article was enough to foot the bill of the hotel and they arrived in Germany safely.

### **MS. PHILIPSBORN**

In Berlin, Zakir Saheb came in contact with Mr. Chattopadhyay, brother of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. There he also met Ms. Philipsborn at the residence of Mrs. Nambiar, sister of Mrs. Naidu. Ms. Philipsborn was very much impressed by Zakir Saheb's work in Berlin. When she came to India, she considered it as her country and embraced Islam. In 1932, she came to Jamia and joined the staff of Jamia in 1933. She had been dissuaded in advance and was told how life in Jamia was full of difficulties, yet she did not agree to all this and informed Zakir Saheb that she was coming to India. Zakir Saheb went to Bombay (now Mumbai) to receive her and escorted her to Jamia. She did not go back and left for heavenly abode while serving at Jamia. She was popularly known as Appa Jaan at Jamia. In Germany, she played a major role in acquainting Zakir Saheb with the psyche and culture of the Germans. She introduced Zakir Saheb to the great musicians and literateurs of Germany. Zakir Saheb participated in musical functions in her company, saw the best of opera theaters, art exhibitions and schools. It was under her guidance that Zakir Saheb got acquainted with beautiful aspects of German education, culture and fine arts. The friendship between the two was profound but both had their own lives to spend separately. Intimacy with Appa Jaan (Philipsborn) began in 1924 and continued till 1943, when she passed away. She was entombed in the Jamia graveyard.

### **RETURN**

Zakir Saheb submitted his research papers for his Ph. D and his oral examination was held on January 7, 1926. He started preparing to return to his country. In early February he left



Germany and arrived in Colombo. He reached Delhi by train. Information regarding his leaving Germany had already been received in Jamia. News regarding his arrival was published in daily 'Hamdard' on February 9, 1926 under the caption "Good luck for Jamia Millia". News regarding his arrival in Colombo and departure for Delhi was published in 'Hamdard' on January 16 itself along with the report of special preparation for his reception in Jamia. Zakir Saheb straightaway went to Jamia after his arrival in Delhi. In Jamia, he was allotted a room adjacent to the office of Shaikhul Jamia. He accepted it without any formality.

After his return from Germany, when Zakir Saheb went to his old town Qaimganj he was welcomed with great enthusiasm. Residents of the township were full of joy and pride as he was the first person of the place to have gone to Germany for higher studies. All of them well dressed, went to the station to receive him and were surprised to see him talking with the railway guard in English. From the station, Zakir Saheb was taken to his home in a procession. On the way, flowers were showered on him. For weeks, feasts were arranged and family members were overjoyed.

## JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, DELHI

Jamia was shifted from Aligarh to its new location at Delhi in 1925 and the teaching started in rented bungalows in Karol Bagh. Abdul Majid Khawaja and after him Tahir S. Mohammadi Saheb was appointed the Vice-Chancellor (Shaikhul Jamia). The financial condition of Jamia was pitiable. Political enthusiasm had also cooled down to a great extent. When Zakir Saheb returned from Germany and joined Jamia he had to face a number of difficulties. Taking charge of Jamia was no bed of roses. It was like a journey to a very distant destination. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the Chancellor. He was closely associated with both the national policy of the country and the religious policy of the Muslims. Gandhiji had great trust in him. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity was being raised vociferously. Both Hakim Ajmal Khan and Gandhiji were against any disruption of this unity. The political and cultural objectives of both were the same. Gandhiji had full cooperation and support of Hakim Saheb. Hakim Saheb was also Masih-ul-mulk (physician of the nation). Nobody could match him in respect of Unani Education System. Even dying patients would recover under his treatment. That is why he was honoured by the title of Masih-ul-mulk. He was called by princely states for treatment. Nawabs and Maharajas of states would come to him for consultation. He was highly reputed in the field of medicine. He helped the poor patients. He was respected everywhere. Hakim Saheb fully cooperated in the activities of the Jamia. The workers in Jamia highly respected him. When Zakir Saheb returned from Germany, he was appointed the Vice-Chancellor. He was privileged to have a chancellor, who was a living model of civilization, culture and nobility along with his

liberal views and was any how managing the expenditure of Jamia.

## DEATH OF HAKIM AJMAL KHAN

Hakim Ajmal Khan passed away on December 29, 1927. All the sources of income for Jamia dried up after the death of Hakim Saheb. The death of Hakim Ajmal Khan was a matter of great sorrow for the whole country but for Jamia Millia Islamia it was just unbearable. And how it would have affected Zakir Saheb! He had learnt a lot from Hakim Ajmal Khan. He knew it was sin to be disappointed by God's act. He had seen Ajmal Khan very closely for two years and had learnt to face difficulties bravely. Doctor Mokhat Ahmed Ansari was appointed the chancellor of Jamia. In fact, it was not possible to fill the void created by the demise of Hakim Saheb because he had nurtured Jamia and had taken great care of it. He was very happy with the appointment of a bold young man like Zakir Saheb as vice-chancellor and wanted to help him whole heartedly. Zakir Saheb used to go to Ballimaran to meet Hakim Ajmal Khan in a tonga from Karol Bagh and sometimes there was long queue of people to meet Hakim Saheb. Zakir Saheb had played an important role in the progress of Jamia and in helping it overcome financial crises, with the help of Hakim Saheb.

After the death of Hakim Saheb, Jamia was facing acute fund-crisis. Zakir Saheb asked his friends about what could be done in this situation whether they wanted to continue with Jamia or close it down. Zakir Saheb's friends proposed to work on honorary basis and run the Jamia. Zakir Saheb was further enthused by the morale and sacrifice of his friends. He felt Jamia should be continued whatever might happen. In fact, Zakir Saheb had dedicated his life to Jamia. Foundation of Anjuman-e-Talime-Milli (National Education Institution) was laid. Zakir Saheb and the teachers of the Jamia thus took upon themselves the task of running the Jamia. The members of the institution took the pledge that they won't leave/desert the Jamia for



twenty years and won't accept monthly salary of more than Rs.150/-. Initially the number of these members was eleven. But gradually the number increased and at the time of Jamia Jubilee it was twenty four. They had no doubt taken the pledge of accepting not more than Rs. 150/- but actually nobody touched the limit. Zakir Saheb was accepting only Rs. 75/- p.m. and sometimes won't receive even that. If some money was received remuneration was distributed, otherwise work would continue just like that. Jamia people no doubt started working on less remuneration, but even then the problem of collection of funds continued. After due deliberation, they formulated a plan to take the Jamia to the people and collect even a small donation from them. With this objective in view an institution called Halka-e-Hamdardan Jamia (Association of Sympathisers of Jamia) was set up. The objective was to educate people about the work of Jamia and get financial assistance from them. This experiment proved very successful. Gradually the association had ten thousand sympathisers and the assistance received from them increased to fifty to sixty thousands at the time of the Jubilee. Even big amount was received from some wealthy persons and the states. The responsibility of this institution was given to Shafiqurrahman Kidwai. He was a well-wisher of Jamia and a zealous worker. He was a good friend of Zakir Saheb. Shafikur-Rehman Kidwai's cooperation in the development of Jamia was very significant. He was always on the move for the work of Jamia and used to go to different towns and villages for collecting donations. To the extent possible, he won't spend even on transport.

In February 1928, a meeting was organised in the memory of Hakim Ajmal Khan, which was presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru. Hindus and Muslims from all over the country attended this meeting. A decision was taken to set up a memorial fund named 'Ajmal Jamia fund'. It was also decided that eight lakh rupees should be deposited in the fund and this fund should be utilised for the development of Hakim Saheb's Memorial

Jamia Millia Islamia. The decision was quite appropriate and this task could have been easily accomplished with the hard work and interest of the fellow leaders of Hakim Saheb but this did not happen. Even if five lakh rupees instead of eight lakhs had been collected for Ajmal Jamia fund a lot could have been achieved. The foundation of Jamia could have been strengthened.

## **GANDHI-BIRLA CORRESPONDENCE**

In this regard, there was correspondence between Gandhiji and Ghanshayam Das Birla also. On March 17, 1928 Birla wrote to Mahadev Desai, "I talked to Jamuna Lal Bajaj about Jamia Milia Islamia. I had visited the institution recently. I have told him my reaction, which he must have conveyed to Gandhiji. It is very difficult to call it a national institution in its present state. There can be two objectives behind the assistance given to it. One, that without taking into consideration whether it is a national institution or it belongs to only one community, we should provide assistance to it to gain the sympathy of the Muslims. If we have to assist it keeping in mind this very objective, then we have to do it without worrying about its future structure. If we want to make it a national institution, we will have to do a lot in this regard right from now. At present it is more an institution of a community than a national institution. I was very much disappointed when I did not find a single photograph of any Hindu leader while the photographs of Anwar Pasha and Kamal Pasha were hanging on the walls of the hostel there. Large number of Arabic books were in the library. Even the name of the institution is in Arabic. Only Muslim culture is visible everywhere. There is nothing wrong that the medium of instruction there is native language. But this certainly does not mean that Arabic and Persian should be promoted more in comparison with Sanskrit and Hindi. No Hindu student will go to study there in the present atmosphere. If Bapu wants to make it a national institution, all these facts will have to be taken into



consideration, but if he wants to assist it despite its Muslim character, there must be some wisdom in this. I did not write all these facts to influence his opinion in any respect but I thought he shall perhaps like to know my views in this regard. He has full right in every respect to give to the institution the amount he wants to.” The year 1928 was full of difficulties for Jamia. Ajmal Jamia fund had been a failure. At that time an amount of rupees 55,000/- was required and there was no possibility of getting this arranged. Zakir Saheb formulated a plan to visit different places in the country, in order to overcome the financial problems. Earlier also he had visited Hyderabad, Bihar etc. and had collected a big amount from these visits. In November 1928, a delegation with Maulana Azad, Dr. Ansari, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Zakir Saheb as members, went to Madras. They delivered speeches there and explained to the people in detail, the objectives of Jamia. They heard the appeal of Gandhiji. Both Hindus and Muslims of Madras gave donations. A delegation had also visited Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad and Varanasi under the leadership of Zakir Saheb.

Gandhiji always had an intimate attachment with Jamia. His son Devdas Gandhi used to teach in Jamia. He got his grandson Rasik Lal admitted there for studies. He passed away while still a student. When Gandhiji came to Jamia, he said after seeing the boys there – “These children are enough to take away my sorrows and grief”. About Jamia he would frequently say, “Jamia should be a role model for the lives of Muslims.”

Zakir Saheb was associated with a numbers of leaders of the country at that time but Gandhiji and Hakim Ajmal Khan specially influenced him. Gandhiji’s style of thinking was different from that of other leaders. He was a true religious person and wanted the teachers and students of Jamia also to be religious minded and should not forget God even for a moment. When Gandhiji came to Jamia, he said in his speech – “the basic things essential for the freedom of the country were two – fear



of God and justice or to be fearless in the face of man-made institutions like the government or the state. I am not worried that your financial condition is not good, but the truth is that I am happy that you are leading a life of want and poverty. This way the memory of your creator will always be fresh in your mind and you will always cherish his memory in your heart.” Gandhiji was fully convinced after meeting Zakir Saheb that Jamia was in the hands of a true Muslim who had faith in Hindu-Muslim unity and considered it essential for the freedom and prosperity of the country. Zakir Saheb also derived great support from the thoughts and actions of Gandhiji.

The establishment of Jamia promoted yet another healthy and good tradition of teaching. Foundation of Anjuman-e-Talime Milli was laid towards the end of 1928 and the full responsibility of running Jamia came upon the teachers and students of Jamia under the leadership of Zakir Saheb. The assistance provided by Seth Jamal Mohammed of Madras was a big help. This helped in repaying of all the debts of Jamia. Some amount was saved for the expenses next year also. Zakir Saheb and his friends were very happy. Seth Jamal Mohammed had said that the work of Jamia was the work of God. Zakir Saheb then visited Hyderabad and Bhopal. The visit to Hyderabad proved to be useful and fruitful for Jamia. Financial assistance was received from that place in good measure.

## JAMIA IN OKHLA

The land was purchased for Jamia in Okhla on the bank of Yamuna, a few miles away from Delhi town. The building of the primary school was constructed first then gradually the buildings of School Teachers Training College and Jamia College were constructed. The amount of interest Zakir Saheb took in the construction of Millia buildings was more than anyone could take in the construction of his own house. His was a very original approach in getting the foundation stone of Jamia buildings laid. Generally the tradition had been that some VIP would lay the

foundation stone. In contrast this auspicious work was accomplished there by a child. In fact, this was a noble gesture by Zakir Saheb towards the future of the children. In January 1935, while making an announcement of this ceremony Zakir Saheb had said, “for this auspicious work I have selected a person who is neither among the Kings nor among the high officials. He is neither rich nor a great scholar. Neither a leader of the country, nor the hero of a community. One who is none of them but can blossom into all of them. He is the youngest child of Jamia. Wise men will appreciate this choice and will accept that this master of the future is far more appropriate for this assignment than the slaves of the present.”

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF JAMIA**

In the words of Zakir Saheb “the greatest objective of Jamia Millia is to charter a map of the future life of Indian Muslims, the center of which should be Islamic religion and that map should have the essence of the Indian civilization which in turn could be assimilated in the hues of general human civilization. Its foundation rests on the premise that true education in religion imparted to the Indian Muslims will infuse in them the love for the country and give lessons in emotional integrity. This will also inspire them to participate in the struggle for India’s freedom. Thus India will join the global community and serve the cause of peace, harmony and social development.

Others also joined hands with Zakir Saheb in this work for Jamia. They set an example of hard work. Everybody took more than his share of the burden of work. Ahead of them all was Zakir Saheb. He was already the vice-chancellor. He had to perform the work of all, including his private secretary, clerk, treasurer and accountant. Not only that, collecting funds for all this and looking after the maintenance of the buildings was also done by him. Teaching in junior classes was also included in his job. With the efforts made by Zakir Saheb, Jamia’s days of want and shortage were coming to an end. Its own buildings were



being constructed. Teachers also started getting their salaries regularly. At that time, Zakir Saheb concentrated on Jamia's soul which was most important to him. He wanted that Jamia's soul should never die. On the occasion of the foundation-laying ceremony of the Jamia building, he said, "with the construction of big buildings it is always feared that the soul of education may get imprisoned in them and abundance of funds might destroy the very objective of the educational institution. You are aware that Jamia was started in small mud houses and huts and its workers always made efforts to ensure that even in the situation of want and shortage, its freedom and high ideals should remain intact. If there is doubt that the Jamia won't remain firm in its objectives with the construction of big buildings, I shall pray that these buildings get destroyed even before they are ready."

## EMBLEM OF JAMIA

The emblem of Jamia has been talked about in a subtle manner in 'Payam-e-Taleem' — a children's magazine brought out by Jamia. Zakir Saheb says — "Do you know what this emblem means? See, at the top is star wherein is written 'Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest)'. When travellers lose the track while travelling in dense forests during dark nights and there is no one to guide them, they look towards the stars to find their way. The star guiding the Jamia is this very Allahu Akbar star. Their gaze is fixed only on the fact that Allah is the greatest. He who bowed his head before him, found out the essence of true life. How can this head bow before anybody after bowing before Him. Below this shining star is a book, on which is written 'Allamul Insan Malam Yalam'. This book is the sacred Quran. Through this book God has let his people know his desire as to how by doing good to others and treating each other as brothers, by bridging the gap between the poor and the rich, removing discrimination on the basis of colour, ending the difference between the master and servant, they can become good and true beings. This book has led human beings from darkness to light;



those who had lost their way were also shown the right path and He who brought forth this book, by the example of His sacred life, and by the warmth of His heart created a set of people who wiped out various evils from the world and set up the true fraternity of the followers of God. There are two date palm trees on each side of this emblem. What is this? This is the symbol of the country wherein was born one who brought the last message of God. This is the symbol of the barren land where nothing would grow and yet the plant of Din-e-Allahi (the plant of Islam religion) took its root. This tree is an encouragement to those who get bewildered by their tasks under different circumstances — that in a country devoid of fruits and flowers except these date palm trees, fountain of good conduct sprang up which quenched the thirst of the settlements of hearts. Then why do you lose heart in the present situation. At the bottom of the emblem is the crescent whereupon is written “Jamia Millia Islamia”. This moon is small in shape now but the way the crescent grows into full moon this Jamia also for which the work has just started by God’s grace will grow into a bright moon providing solace to those looking at it.

## NATIONAL INSTITUTION

Zakir Saheb strongly desired Jamia to be such a national institution where nation and Islam should be seen moving hand in hand. A community should take pride in its being Muslim and a Muslim should be proud of his being a nationalist. Religion should become the means of national integration. His desire was fully reflected in the healthy nature of Jamia. There was no discrimination. One teacher Kelat Saheb was a Christian. He used to teach English and conducted physical exercise for the children. He used to send children for morning namaz and was more particular than the Muslim teachers in ensuring that the boys offered namaz regularly.

Zakir Saheb was deeply interested in the development of the children from the very beginning. He treated the education of

children as essential. Therefore he gave more emphasis on the education of children in Jamia. When Zakir Saheb was in Germany, he had studied a number of education related experiments which proved very useful at this time. He started making new experiments regarding the education of children of Jamia. In order to create an atmosphere of equality, a day was fixed when all the teachers and students together did all the work of the school. All the employees used to be on leave and their work was done by the children. A dinner was also arranged when all teachers, employees and children sat together to have food cooked by students. The children were thus educated to work manually and were taught the feeling of equality. This was an extra-ordinary experiment initiated by Zakir Saheb.

## **MAKTABA-E-JAMIA**

Zakir Saheb laid the foundation of Maktaba-e-Jamia in Jamia. Dewan-e-Ghalib, Rubiyyat-e-Omar Khayyam, Dewan-e-Shaida etc. were published under his supervision. Publication of “Jamia” magazine was started. This has been accepted as a standard magazine of Urdu. Zakir Saheb had also been the President of the Tarakki-e-Urdu Hind. He launched the scheme to bring out a magazine for children named “Payam-e-Taleem”. Articles for children were written in the magazine. Zakir Saheb himself wrote a number of articles in this magazine. Jamia is still being published and Makataba-e-Jamia is still publishing good books.

## **STYLE OF WORK**

Zakir Saheb had a unique style of working. He worked with his colleagues in such a way that the question of officer and subordinate did not arise. He had distributed work to everyone according to his ability. Everybody realized his responsibility in running the Jamia. Jamia was their home and family. Zakir Saheb was the Vice-Chancellor but did all sorts of work himself. He taught in the first class of the primary school and also in the



college. He performed the office-work, supervised sanitation work and also looked after food. No work was small or big for him. Rasheed Saheb in his book "Zakir Saheb" has said about him – "everybody big or small always saw what he is and what he is doing and what kind of person exactly was Zakir Saheb. Weighing everything on this scale ended the matter. One who considered himself big intellectually, bowed his head before Zakir Saheb's mental ability. If virtues of his sacrifice, dedication and character came to someone's mind, he found the scale of balance weighing in favour of Zakir Saheb. If someone was proud of his noble descent or social and government contacts, he found his leader more important in terms of descent and his acquaintances were strong and extensive. In respect of hardwork and performance of duty there was no one there to equal Zakir Saheb who could forsake his rest and recreation for duty. If someone became conscious of his talent and fine taste, he found Zakir Saheb great in this respect. The clerk found that Zakir Saheb did more clerical work than him and was ahead of others in performing small things with his own hands. The child saw that Zakir Saheb was more youthful than him and the old knew that old age was scared of approaching Zakir Saheb, so why should he fear it. Except him everybody believed that he was working hard for others' benefits, considered their sorrows and griefs, honour and rest, his own. Then how could anybody let his conscience bite by leaving the company of Zakir Saheb."

## ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS

Jamia was making progress in the Okhla buildings. Its financial condition was getting better but in 1937, its conditions started deteriorating because of differences and confrontation between the Congress and Mr. Jinnah. The atmosphere was vitiated. Communal Hindus and Muslims wanted to burn each other to ashes in the fire of hatred. Nationalist Hindus and Muslims both wanted to take them in the arena of political struggle bound with the string of love. In such a situation it was



not an easy task to row the boat of Jamia and sail it through the tumultuous sea of communalism and escaping politics at the same time. Zakir Saheb was able to achieve this impossible task. He kept on taking the small group of Jamia workers forward through education and development. When financial constraints were over and Jamia income increased then Zakir Saheb and his colleagues instead of spending money on themselves invested on national education, construction of buildings and purchase of land. In 1938, Teacher's training college based on the principles of the Wardha scheme was set up in Jamia. Teachers from far and near came for training there and went to every nook and the corner of the country with the high ideal of national education. Hindustani Education Association was also constituted under Gandhiji's supervision. Zakir Saheb was appointed its President and continued to perform the duties of the President till 1950. This association accomplished many important tasks under his patronage. The task of making education useful, spreading it to the common man, giving it a firm foundation to make it commercially viable and to make it easily accessible was the realization of Gandhiji's dream.

Zakir Saheb kept himself very busy day and night. He would get up early and reach Jamia and walk around all the buildings of Jamia. He visited even the class rooms, office, bathrooms and toilets. He picked up pieces of paper scattered here and there and erased with his own hand the odd line drawn on the walls. Then he joined the Jamia anthem sung daily in the morning. Thereafter, he addressed the children for sometime to teach them good things. From there he went to the office room, bring out the pieces of paper from his pocket and put them in the waste paper basket. He cleaned his table and chair himself, often swept the room himself with broom. His morning breakfast was brought to office from his home which included left over rotis of the night and some milk. After breakfast he would settle down to work, which included everything related to Jamia. In the afternoon, around two to two thirty he used to send a message

that he would not be able to reach home for lunch and later it was sent to office itself. Again his work started and in the evenings he had to go out, attending meetings, or elsewhere at times. He travelled by bus. Waiting for a bus took hours those days. Sometimes he took a tonga, or walked on foot. If he returned home late, he would not wake up anybody; silently he would take his meal and go to bed.

Zakir Saheb's life had been completely integrated with Jamia. Great leaders of the country, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah etc. came to Jamia. Foreign leaders like Chiang Kai Shek and foreign educationists came to Jamia and became Zakir Saheb's guests. One day a gentleman came to Jamia Nagar, went around and while leaving gave his card and summoned someone the next day. When a person was sent to him he handed over rupees one hundred and told him to give this amount to Jamia. That gentleman was a noble man from Chandni Chowk – Ladli Prasad.

Donations from sympathiesrs increased the income of Jamia. In 1946, this amount increased to rupees forty eight thousand. This was in addition to the donation of two and a half lakh rupees for the jubilee celebrations. Jamia had now a property of land and buildings worth thirty to thirty five lakh rupees. Delhi Municipality also approved grant and the administration recognised the degree of Jamia in 1945. Jamia was now advancing on the path of progress and Zakir Saheb was the guide of this caravan. He continued to draw his earlier salary. It was not increased at all. Zakir Saheb went to Bombay on April 30, 1945. Both Hindus and Muslims there gave donations open-heartedly. An amount of seventy seven thousand was collected there. He went to Delhi, Rampur etc., in May. There an appeal was made for ten lakh rupees for the jubilee and over twelve lakh rupees were collected.



## JAMIA SILVER JUBILEE

Passing through many difficulties, Jamia completed twenty five years of its life. Zakir Saheb had always had Jamia's objective in mind. He worked hard and felt helpless at times, tolerated humiliation, waited patiently and yet kept smiling. He was never scared of anybody and kept on moving ahead. He never allowed education to be subverted by riches and wealth. He never allowed the rich or the government to exploit Jamia or interfere in Jamia's activities or to take it over. He was in direct touch with the people and accepted only such aid from the states and the government which was without any strings. He asked for donations but with dignity. More than asking for donations, Zakir Saheb's objective was to educate the rich. He made them realize their duties. Everyone seemed to be influenced by Zakir Saheb's speeches. Tears would sometimes roll down from his eyes. He made his point powerfully. He used to say, "don't give to Jamia a single paisa on somebody's recommendation. You have seen the twenty five years long struggle and if you feel this work is beneficial for the nation and the community, this is not the duty of the workers to go to you to beg for help, it should be your own task to perform. You yourself come forward for this." He further said "the donor always has the upper hand but the modesty of the rich is in keeping his hand lower while helping for the cause of learning and education and allow the recipient have an upper hand in it."

In 1945, it was decided to celebrate Jamia's silver Jubilee. The political situation in the country at that time was very confusing. The fire of intolerance was burning. It was very difficult for the people of different ideologies to be unanimous on anything and assemble at one point. It was the magic of Zakir Saheb's personality — he brought all people at one place on the occasion of Jamia Jubilee which was celebrated on November 15, 1946. The leaders like Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali also attended the celebration along with Pandit Jawahar Lal



Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Hussain, Rajgopalachari etc. The grand jubilee programme continued till November 18. The management of jubilee celebrations by Zakir Saheb was an example in itself and in the history of Jamia it was an extraordinary event. Amir-e-Jamia-Abdul Majeed Khwaja performed the ceremony of unfurling the flag. Zakir Saheb delivered a very significant speech on the occasion, referring to which Rasheed Ahmed Siddiqui Saheb had said that when Zakir Saheb rose to deliver his presidential speech, all eyes were fixed on him. What a speech! With so much affection, self-confidence and compassion, a true and strong man was presenting his contemplative ideas to the vast crowd of humanity belonging to this nation. For a while, it was felt that the storm which was destroying and devastating all good ideas and actions would change its direction. The sun, which was being eclipsed would once again shine. All eyes were tearful. It seemed as if the soul of the nation itself was being addressed by the Nation incarnate. The storm did not stop with Zakir Saheb's speech and all that was to happen did happen. But the history of the nation to be written in future will mention the fact that Zakir Saheb's name was noteworthy among those who raised their voice in favour of justice, gentility and humanity in the hour of crises keeping themselves aloof from discrimination narrow-mindedness and ignorance.

Addressing the Amir of Jamia, Abdul Majid Khwaja Saheb, Zakir Saheb said, "during the last eighty five years we have tried to give some meaning to the flag you have unfurled just now. We have tried that this should become the flag of proper and sacred education, that is, this flag should become a source of inspiration for people to work hard and strive for unity in character and maturity in behaviour without surrendering their individual personality. This flag should also stand as the symbol for human beings to work incessantly without caring for the outcome; a symbol to consider their work as worship and to work despite hardships to construct one's life. This should also be a symbol of

beauty, sanctity and purity; of fitness and courage; of truth and fearlessness and moral courage, of sacrificing one's life for one's rights and justice, of remaining sombre and gentle even in the face of adversities and of gratitude in the event of plenty. We have tried that the children being brought up here grow into healthy-minded friends. They should be well mannered, have etiquettes, be firm in intention, clear in ideas, keen to speak their own minds and listen to others. They should be versatile, active, fearless, only god-fearing and need not be intimidated by others. We have tried to give meaning to this flag in true spirit and full faith. We are aware, our efforts are full of our weaknesses but we also know that those who make efforts, attain fulfillment by the grace of god. Those whose hearts are full of good intentions God gives them strength to fulfil their tasks and provides firmness to their wavering steps."

On this occasion, addressing the national leaders present there, Zakir Saheb said, "Today because of the fire of communalism which has been set ablaze in the country, our work of hedging the garden seems to be madness. This fire scorches the world of civility, gentlemanliness and humanity. How can the good, the virtuous and the well-behaved blossom in the prevalent situation? How can the character of fallen human beings be amended. How can the civilisation progress when barbarism reigns supreme? How can people dedicated to service be produced. How can humanity be sustained in this world of animals? How can I tell you, what times we are passing through? In this hour of crises even the guileless children are not safe. Every child that is born, brings the message that God is still not fully disappointed with human beings. But are the human beings of our country so disappointed with themselves that they want to crush the delicate buds even before they blossom." He made an appeal to the respectable leaders of the country — "Please join hands and extinguish this fire. This is not the time to find out who set the fire, how fire broke out. Fire is there, please put it out. The issue is not related to the existence of either of



the communities, but to the choice between civilised human life and beastly. For God's sake, please don't let the foundation of civilised life in this country be dug up this way." Concluding his speech, he said, "If anyone is praiseworthy in Jamia, it is not me alone. It is my colleagues who do not disclose their names to anyone and are engaged in its service day and night. Rarely are such devoted workers associated with any institution. They have passed through a number of difficulties in the last twenty five years and have never complained. They worked for the children of the nation, for the community while their own children longed for good food and clothes. They have forsaken everything for the intellectual life of the community and there could not be any proper arrangement for their own mental food. They long for books, research papers. For months they don't receive their salary. They have faced many problems but have paved the way for national progress." When Zakir Saheb was delivering his speech, his voice choked and tears rolled down the eyes of the audience. Rajgopalachari delivered his speech after Zakir Saheb's address and while recalling the services rendered by Jamia, announced an assistance of seven lakhs rupees on behalf of the Government of India. The U.P. Government allotted the land. The nawab of Bahawalpur donated one lakh rupees. It seemed as if Zakir Saheb's speech had created a magical spell over the function. Hafiz Jallandhari recited his famous poem titled "Jamia Millia Islamia". This poem of Hafiz was very much liked and for a long time Jamia and the people kept on murmuring this poem.

Thus, the Jamia Jubilee programme went on for four days with great success. All who came to participate in the function were very much impressed with the work of Jamia and went back highly satisfied. Pt. Nehru also offered his congratulations and good wishes on this success.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION

In 1937, the Congress Government had been formed in some provinces. Gandhiji at that time thought of formulating a new scheme of education system in the country so that along with education, an interest in industry and arts be developed among the students in accordance with their needs, surroundings and circumstances. This should not also put burden of expenditure on the administration or the people. He wrote a number of articles in *Harijan* in this regard. Zakir Saheb used to go to Wardha and Sabaramati in order to talk to Gandhiji and also to discuss his points of view on National Education. The result of this discussion was the Wardha Scheme.

### NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

On Gandhiji's request, All India National Education Conference was organised at Wardha on October 22, 1937 to consider proposals regarding new education. The objective was to create free, compulsory and self-dependent education system in rural areas. The conference was also attended by a number of educational experts, Congress ministers and leaders. There was a very big plan behind this suggestion of Gandhiji. The Congress Government of Madras decided to stop manufacture and sale of liquor. Educational institutions were a stumbling block in this decision because it was impossible to run educational institutions after the discontinuance of excise duty. Their expenditure was met from this duty. Gandhiji came forward with the suggestion that education system should be designed in a manner where it could stand on its own i.e. be self-reliant. This could make the job of administration easier and might result in putting an end to unemployment. This was possible only when in



addition to teaching of books, education was imparted in handicrafts or manual works and the goods thus produced and sold were enough to entail the expenses of the school.

## WARDHA CONFERENCE

This issue was very serious. Wardha Conference was held to consider this subject under the presidentship of Gandhiji. Though not fully fit Gandhiji spoke for about one and a half hour on the subject. In his speech, Gandhiji while putting forth his ideas on education, said, "the education upto the standard of primary, secondary and high school should be formulated in a way which would provide for the essential education of any of the handicrafts. The provision of four year period of elementary education is very short and should be extended to seven years and by making secondary education part of elementary education, a systematic curriculum should be drawn in such a manner that after completion of education, the knowledge of the students should be almost at par with the knowledge required for matriculation. However, this education should not be imparted through books alone. The main objective of the curriculum should be development of handicraft and skill. All the remaining subjects should be taught." Referring to the sad plight of rural craftsman, he reminded that even now everywhere in rural India, industries are either closing down or are in bad shape. They can be reformed by education. "Takli" and "Charkha" can always be helpful everywhere. Keeping them center stage, subjects like history, economics, arithmetic, geography can be easily taught.

Alongwith opening schools, he gave due emphasis on their being self-reliant and said that in a poor country like India there was no other way to reach the education to the common man. He said "character building cannot be attained through books but by manual work. It is no human trait to work with an empty mind, it is the trait of the devil. In the field of education we

cannot set the example of Europe where arms and ammunition play dominant role and Russia can't be a role model for us. Europe and America has spent a lot on education and this amount comes from the exploitation of other races. We have to give special attention to measures which are appropriate for our economic condition and moral beliefs."

After this speech, Gandhi sought the opinion of the people attending the conference. They were so overwhelmed by his speech that nobody dared look at him. Zakir Saheb stood up and accepted the challenge. He said in his speech, "Mahatmaji thinks that the scheme he has placed before you is absolutely original and that it can be accepted only by those who believe in non-violence and rural civilization but those who are working in the educational field will not find Mahatmaji's scheme very new. They know that true learning can be imparted only by doing. They also know that children have to be taught various subjects through manual work, no matter whether one believes in rural or urban civilization or in violence or non-violence. We teachers fully know the secret that children upto the age of thirteen have the tendency to make or break, join and disjoin things. Nature educates them in this way. It is high-handedness with children to tell them to sit at one place with books. Many an educationist have therefore been trying to make manual work, the center of education. This method is called project method in America and complex method in Russia. This method is not as limited as Gandhiji has said. Every skill or handicrafts cannot be taught through Takli. Shall we ignore other arts? We shall teach children through the medium of other arts also."

Zakir Saheb said, "so far as the issue of making education self-supporting is concerned, this experiment did not succeed in America. Prof. Dewey had also a similar plan, but he had to close down his school after a few years. America is a rich country where there is no scarcity of state help. If this experiment could not succeed, how can this succeed in a poor



country like ours? You will say that we want self supporting schools because our country is poor. Our schools have to be self supporting but there is also a risk in this. It is quite likely the teachers might act as though taking undue advantage of the labour put in by poor school children and behave like officers who drive the slaves. Under these circumstances, the *Takli* will prove worse than books and we shall be laying the foundation of a slave nation.”

He said, “I am aware that the Government cannot bear the expenses of universal and compulsory education. If it musters courage to do so it will soon be bankrupt but this situation would be better than destroying the competence and strength of the nation.” Zakir Saheb said that true education meant development of the talent of man. The German expert Istanvi Lautzi has accepted this as a better method and on the basis of this view hundreds of teachers tried to evolve methods in order to give it a practical shape. His method is more extensive than that of Gandhiji. Gandhiji had earmarked seven year period for elementary education. Zakir Saheb was of the view that elementary education will be over at the time of actual possession of ability and talent of the child. As a result, education will remain incomplete. He said, “separate schools for different subjects, one for handicrafts, another for industries, third one for arithmetic and science should be established. He also suggested that if we wanted to implement this on a large scale we should open schools at selected places and set up such models which could generally be imitated later. Otherwise, there might be risk of the new education being more harmful than being beneficial. Zakir Saheb’s plan was appreciated by all. The next meeting was addressed by Vinoba Bhave, Kaka Kalelkar etc. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Ravi Shankar Shukla which was C.P. (Central Provinces) at that time presented the solution of compulsory education in a different manner. He was of the view that the land acquired for school should be so

large as to be sufficient for the subsistence of the teachers. He named his innovative scheme “Vidya Mandir Yojana.”

## **ZAKIR HUSSAIN COMMITTEE**

According to the wishes of Gandhiji, the committee under the Presidentship of Zakir Saheb pondered over these suggestions. Everybody got the opportunity to participate in the discussion and speak his mind. The committee presented four proposals :

1. Arrangements should be made for compulsory education for all in the country.
2. Mother tongue should be the medium of education.
3. During this period handicrafts selected from the surrounding of the child should be the basis of education. Whatever else is taught should also be related to this.
4. This education system should gradually generate so much income that it should be able to bear the expenses of the teachers.

All these proposals were presented and approved. Mahatma Gandhi constituted a committee to formulate the curriculum of the new education system and Zakir Saheb was made its President. E. W .R. Nayakam was its convener and Khwaja Saidain, Kishori Lal Mashruwala, K.T.Shah, J.C.Kumarappe, Vinoba Bhave, Shrikrishna Das Jajoo, Kaka Kalelkar and Asha Devi were members.

Zakir Saheb prepared the report at the residence of Prof. Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui in Aligarh. Along with the preparation of the report the work of sleeping, sitting, taking food, reading and writing and even gossiping continued in that room. All sorts of people would come to meet him. Discussions were held on the problem of education also. Books, reports and



files were heaped around. Some people came from training college, their talks were held with them. If somebody came to sell something, eatables were bought and consumed. If some poet came, recitation of poems would start. Amidst all this, the outline of the report was also prepared. Then Zakir Saheb needed a few hours in seclusion, so he was shifted to another room on the upper storey which was locked from outside. According to Rashid Saheb, "(the room was locked from outside) for fear that Zakir Saheb might come out of the room." Not even two hours passed that one gentleman came to meet him and while he was enquiring from the servant, his voice was heard by Zakir Saheb. Instantly he stood upon a stool kept near the ventilator and uttered "I am locked here and the key is with Rasheed Saheb but that does not matter. He also wanted to find out whether he got the papers. The visitor replied, "Yes. I have copied the report and brought it." Zakir Saheb said, "please read it." He started reading. Meanwhile Rashid Saheb returned from the University and saw this drama. He said, "what is this?" He went upstairs unlocked the room and saw Zakir Saheb was singing to himself after completing the whole report. Then he asked, "What were you listening?" Zakir Saheb replied, "I had to give the reference of some report. I had some doubts particularly at one point. So I had asked this gentleman to see the actual report. Now that he has read it to me, I am satisfied." The report was thus prepared within a week and was submitted to Gandhiji in December 1937.

When Haripura Congress Session was held in February 1938, this scheme of national education was considered and even a resolution was adopted. The Congress had realised the importance of the national education since 1906. National schools were set up at various places during the non-cooperation movement. The structure of the present education system had already failed at that time in India. That was limited to a handful of persons and a large section of population was left illiterate. Therefore, it was necessary that arrangement of national

education with a new foundation should be made for all. In this connection, the Congress accepted as it is, all the four proposals, which were presented by the committee of the Wardha Conference under the Presidentship of Zakir Saheb. This was also decided by the Congress resolution that a new all India Education Board should be set up so as to start the basic work. For this Dr. Zakir Hussain and E.W.R.Naikam were requested and authorised to constitute the board under Gandhiji's supervision and initiate action immediately. The board was also authorised to enact its set of laws.

## WARDHA SCHEME

The real objective of Wardha scheme was to project a form of education which should by integrating and unifying knowledge and practice, manual work and bookish knowledge, mind and body, individual and society, create an element which had been destroyed by slavery from the midst of life and education. Zakir Saheb's report was published in the form of a book "Basic National Education" by Maktabae Jamia in 1939. Apart from Urdu it was published in other languages also. The report was divided in five parts.

The first part threw light on basic principles and in this connection stress was laid on the new structure of education while reviewing the prevalent education system. The importance of manual work in schools was highlighted and the ways and means to earn their own expenditure were suggested while explaining the scheme.

The objectives of the scheme were pointed out in the second part. The outline of the seven-year curriculum of primary education was presented. Basic industries (handicrafts) suggested for schools included spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture and leather work. Regarding mother tongue it was observed that the mother tongue will be the medium of instruction in provinces where Hindustani was spoken. But it will be essential for both



students and teachers to learn both Nagri and Persian scripts so that they read the book written in Urdu as well as Hindi.

The third part of the scheme related to the training of teachers. The most important condition of the success of the scheme was better training for the teachers and this became all the more necessary when the system of education was to be changed all together.

The fourth part was about instruction and examination. This incorporated a number of suggestions to change the prevalent examination system which was dubbed imperfect.

The fifth part laid special emphasis on management and mentioned in detail the facts regarding administration and management of schools.

At the end of the scheme, there was a letter by members in the name of Gandhiji. The letter mentioned the allegations against the schemes, discussions held and the clarifications thereof. The complete curriculum upto class seven was incorporated. In the form of annexure details were given regarding area of land, number of rooms, length and breadth etc. for model schools up to class seven.

When Wardha Scheme came to light, it became a subject of discussion and analysis. One group saw it from a particular view point. It tried its best to prove every step of Gandhiji to be against a particular community or religion. It was not possible to satisfy them by any logic or evidence. Otherwise also, Zakir Hussain did not take the trouble of giving any reply to this group. Maulana Abdul Mazeed Dariabadi observed about this scheme, "the official name of this scheme was Wardha Scheme. It does not come to mind, who coined the name Vidya Mandir. There was nothing against the teachings of Islam in it. It was only because of Gandhiji being judge of merits and his non-communal view point that he selected a Muslim for this major scheme of national education."

About the scheme, Shiekh Abdullah had said “Wardha Scheme has today become essential for educationists in order to lay the foundation of proper and useful education system in India. So far as I have understood, the objective of education is to prepare people to wage a war against that oppression and injustice which have been placed on their shoulders by circumstances and the society. It was exactly this that Gandhiji had presented in his Wardha Scheme. Various views about the scheme were presented in *Educational India* and *Hindu* and other newspapers and magazines. Rabindranath Tagore said in this regard “Mahatma Gandhi has given attention to the education of the people. When the proposal/resolution will be implemented, we will get a new evidence of the ability of this great man whose action is always an improvement on what he says.”

Much was said against this scheme. Zakir Saheb replied to this in detail in the March 1938 issue of Jamia magazine. Concluding his remarks, he said “when the principles of the scheme of basic education will be sincerely accepted, a new era will be ushered in the Indian Education and National life.” As a consequence of the Wardha Scheme, a new education committee was also constituted.

## **WARDHA SCHEME AND JAMIA**

In order to give practical shape to Wardha Scheme, a training centre for teachers was set up in Jamia in 1938. That very year, according to the wishes of Gandhiji, the Congress set up Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Indian Education Association) through which the aforesaid training centre continued receiving financial aid. It was made compulsory for every teacher of Jamia School to learn two vocations. Stress was laid on doing everything manually because Zakir Saheb had always been of the view that when emphasis was laid on making manual work an important tool in classes, how could it be wise to deny this at the training centre of teachers in those classes. The fact is that



being distanced from National life and such indifference towards day to day requirements will continue unless the aforesaid teaching institutions become a tool to keep a handful of selfish persons aloof from amongst themselves. Khwaja Abdul Saidu Saheb has written in detail about the scheme of Zakir Saheb in his book 'Aandhi mein Chiraag' (Lamp in storm). Jamia was set up on the foundation of nationalism and it fully implemented the scheme by laying special emphasis on manual work.

Zakir Saheb's health was being affected by bearing the responsibility of education under the Wardha Scheme along with the duties of the Jamia Millia Islamia. He went to Germany in June 1939. He was not even fully cured when the Second World War broke out in September. On his return, Zakir Saheb found that the experiment of basic education was passing through a critical phase. The main reason was that neither the Congress Government nor the persons responsible for the education system were ready to perform the work with honesty. The Congress Government in provinces resigned a few days after the War started. Thereafter still more critical phase of the scheme started.

In 1940, the resolution for the demand of Pakistan was adopted in Lahore. In 1947, the country was partitioned. By then, a number of changes took place in the political situation of the country which affected the creative work. In April 1947, Hindustani Talimi Sangh met in Patna. Talks held between Gandhiji and Zakir Saheb there reflect the whole situation of the time and the state of their mind. When Zakir Saheb told Gandhiji that after completing their education the children of these schools look towards mills and factories for jobs, Gandhiji was very sad and surprised. He told Zakir Saheb that he was right, what could we do when the craze for mill cloth was there all over the country and countrymen were also interested in setting up mills. The Congress itself constituted Talimi Sangh but did not take interest in it. Something like this happened with 'Charkha Sangh'

also. Who cares for such organisation and work. When the congressmen were falling short of finances and lagging behind in experience they paid some attention also to creative work and there is no doubt that they also did some creative work. "This will take sometime," Zakir Saheb said, "ministers don't agree with our ideas. Now either you be the contact person between the Government and the Sangh or else we should work freely on our own." In reply, Gandhiji said, "I am in touch with Jawaharlal and others. I Pray. God should either make me depart from this world or give me the strength to ensure trust between both the people and their representatives."



## THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

**Z**akir Saheb was greatly influenced by Gandhiji. During his student life in Aligarh, Zakir Saheb under the influence of Gandhiji had left M.A.O. College and got himself engaged in setting up the Jamia Millia Islamia - the institution of national importance. Throughout his life, he remained busy in this work. Zakir Saheb was a nationalist with a religious bend of mind. He learnt a lot from Gandhiji. He never felt scared speaking the truth. He was completely with Gandhiji during Khilafat Movement and Non-cooperation Movement. The Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement were so successful in the country that the Government got troubled and baffled. The report prepared by Williams officially for presentation in the Parliament had clearly accepted the success of this/these movements. It was also accepted that among the educational institutions the movement was most effective in Aligarh. Some members of the Jamia took active part in Salt Satyagrah also, because of which, the Nizam of Hyderabad stopped the grant, which was restored after a lot of strenuous effort. While observing National Week (Quami Week) the people of Jamia did some construction work. Along with imparting education regarding sanitation and health, arrangements were made to give cotton and charkha to poor men and women to provide them employment. Addressing a meeting on this occasion, Zakir Saheb said, "I wish you observe this week in such a manner that your inner feeling of true service to the community and nation is not lost in topical and temporal emotion. Integrate this feeling with your character by hard work and labour in such a way that it becomes a part of your nature. In this country, it is not thousands or lakhs but crores of people die like flies and mosquitoes and there is none to teach them the

lesson of sanitation and health. In this country, crores of people live without getting even one square meal and there is none to give them any support. There is no lack of opportunity for sincere service here. I expect from all the students of Jamia that they will give more importance to the benefits of the community and the nation than their fame and gains.

## DETERIORATING SITUATION

The situation in the country was deteriorating fast. It was hey day for the communal leaders and foundation was laid for the partition of the country. Zakir Saheb himself was not in politics. But he was crazy about improving the situation around. Whenever he came in contact with political leaders, he did not let go the opportunity to make a painful appeal. He got such an opportunity during the second annual session of Bunyaadi Quami Talim. This convention was held in Jamia Nagar in April 1940. Babu Rajendra Prasad was present there. Taking advantage of the situation Zakir Saheb said, “(Through Babu Rajendra Prasad present here) I want the request of the teaching community to reach the political leaders that for God’s sake the political reforms should be brought about soon so that the foundation of such a nation could be laid wherein mutual trust would prevail among communities inhabiting it. The meek should not fear the strong and the poor should not be hit by the rich.... how long can one cultivate this political desert? How long should one stare at education shrouded with doubt and suspicion and how long should one shudder at the thought of some political error or obstinacy which would burn out the life filled with love and affection to ashes.... where should we seek support? Right in the society where even brothers are not united at heart! No values seem to be lasting; no song to be sung in chorus and no festivals to be celebrated jointly; no marriage functions that can be organised jointly and no sorrow that can be shared jointly. Please dispell our difficulty and do this expeditiously. It is already too late, a further delay may worsen the situation.”



## **DIFFICULT TIMES**

This was a period of great difficulty in some way and a challenge for Jamia. In 1937, after the formation of Congress Government the venom oozing out of the differences and confrontation of Jinnah and his colleagues with Congress kept on spreading increasingly. Zakir Saheb was in great dilemma under this poison-filled atmosphere. Communal Hindus and Muslims wanted to burn each other to ashes in this fire of hatred. Liberals were eager to bring them to political struggle after binding both in the chains of love. In such a time, it was a difficult task for Zakir Saheb to run the Jamia by keeping it aloof from politics. In 1946, when the formation of interim Government came to the fore and Zakir Saheb's name was proposed for the Cabinet by the Congress, he refused to accept it.

## **PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY**

Zakir Saheb could not avert the partition of the country and the day came in the history of the country when the country was divided into two parts. Pakistan was formed but this partition proved to be very painful for the country and for the people of the country. This had only instigated the Hindu-Muslim riots instead of putting an end to them. Countless number were killed, crores became homeless. A sensitive soul, who wanted to integrate the whole country and who devoted his whole life in improving the lives of others, had to suffer a lot in this situation. He was very sad during those days. Clashes had begun at several places. He thought of going to Srinagar for a few days.

## **COMMUNAL RIOTS**

Punjab was set ablaze by communal riots. People tried to stop Zakir Saheb from going to Srinagar in this situation. Having faith in God and his men, Zakir Saheb left Delhi. Manzoor Saheb was with him. Fazal Saheb, resident of Jalandhar joined him on the way. When the train reached Ludhiana, they enquired about going to Pathankot. The station master out of mischief did not

give them the correct information. They got down at Jallandar station. Nobody was at the station there. Only Gorkhas were on guard. Meanwhile, one tall strong man along with 10-12 robust persons entered the compartment and told his companions to lift the luggage. On this, Manzoor Saheb tried to stop them and in the quarrel, there was exchange of words with Fazal Saheb, who slapped the leader of the group. This led to the bursting of anger and he ordered to fire. On his orders, Gorkha military men stood with their pointed guns. Fazal Saheb and Manzoor Saheb were at their wit's end. Meanwhile, one gentleman who got acquainted on the way saw Zakir Saheb in this condition, ran to the station master and told him that the person in the train was Zakir Saheb and a friend of Pt. Nehru. If something happened to him, heavens would fall. On hearing the name of Zakir Saheb, the station master came out and escorted Zakir Saheb to his room pushing back the soldiers. Meanwhile, the military officer Gurdayal Singh came that way. When he came to know what had happened, he felt ashamed. The goondas said they would allow Zakir to go but not the two persons accompanying him. When Zakir Saheb came to know about the facts, he became tense and came out of the station master's room and said, "wherever we go, we will go together." Gurdayal Singh rebuked these goons and made them run away and arranged to send Zakir Saheb to Bedi saheb's residence under his security. Bedi Saheb, those days, was a judge there. They stayed there very comfortably. Next day, Bedi Saheb sent them to the station in a motor car for boarding the Delhi train. On the way Gurdayal Singh was seen in a jeep. Zakir Saheb stopped the car and got down instantly. As soon as he got down, the crowd again started gathering seeing his beard. Gurdayal Singh made the crowd flee by rebuking them and requested Zakir Saheb to take his meal with him. Later, he took Zakir Saheb to the station under his security and got him board the Delhi bound train. When the train reached Ludhiana, some ruffians were seen again. Zakir Saheb fearlessly got down at the platform. Meanwhile, a Hindu came



and fell on his feet and said “ you are the master of my master. I will accompany you.” Some sikh students of Delhi also came in the same compartment and said that they will protect them even at the cost of their lives.

When Zakir Saheb arrived in Delhi only three days after his departure, all the inmates of the house were surprised as he had planned the programme for weeks. How did he come back so early. He coolly narrated the incident. He informed Pt. Nehru also on phone about the situation. On his return, so many persons came to see him and inquired about the incident that he felt harassed and afflicted by repeating the same an almost umpteenth number of times.

## **RIOTS IN DELHI**

It was only after a few days that the calamity struck Delhi in early September. Communal riots broke out on a massive scale. Along with other places, the godown of Maktaba-e-Jamia in Karol Bagh was burnt down and the Jamia library was burnt to ashes. On the other hand, there was threat to the Jamia Nagar township from all sides in Okhla. The nearby villages were bent upon destroying the township. Clashes and killings were going on in the city. People were shocked and a number of Muslims had decided to leave India. However, Zakir Saheb had decided not to move out of his place. It was because of the courage and boldness of Zakir Saheb that the people of Jamia overcame their dilemma. He told his friends not to loose heart and made arrangements for their security. Other nearby villages were also contacted. All the residents of Jamia township assembled in the Jamia building. Women lived in one part and men in another. All of them were on guard in turns during night. Zakir Saheb would also join in this endeavour.

When there was a danger of attack on Jamia, Pt. Nehru told him to move to some safer place. Zakir Saheb told him very clearly, “if Jamia was attacked every drop of his blood will fall here only. I am not going to move away from this place.”

Therefore, he kept on performing work in office in a normal way and made others also work. He told his colleagues that they could all go, he would alone stay there. If he remained alive, he would spend his life in teaching those who came from Punjab. Zakir Saheb did not leave Delhi; others also followed his example and stayed back.

Gandhiji was not in Delhi at the time of communal riots. He arrived in Delhi on September 9. Pt. Nehru was very sad. He told Gandhiji that the roads of Delhi were replete with dead bodies. Peace and tranquility had been destroyed. Gandhiji was very disappointed and helpless. Still people were relieved after his arrival. Gandhiji visited various roads of the city and came to Jamia on September 10. He listened to the woes of the people and consoled them. One woman had a child in her lap who had lost its parents in the riots. Tears rolled down the eyes of many persons on seeing this sight. On this Gandhiji said, "if the situation demanded then sacrifice your life by uttering the name of God but don't loose your heart." Addressing the residents of Jamia, he said, "I will not be sorry even if each one of you had to sacrifice his life for this beautiful institution which has been set up by both the Hindus and the Muslims together." He told a group of people who had sought shelter, "I promise, either I will set things right or sacrifice my life in this endeavour."

## SETTING UP CAMPS

In this bloody episode in Delhi, thousands were killed, wounded and had become homeless and were lying in various camps. These camps were set up at Jama Masjid, Old Fort (Purana Qila) and other places. Mahatmaji visited these camps on September 11, 12 and 13 and arranged to send items needed there. Zakir Saheb had engaged himself in conducting the city's Muslims whose lives were under threat to the camps and also in making arrangement for their food etc. He kept moving in the whole city in a jeep for this work. He neither feared death, nor



cared for any problems. He saw the plight of refugees in Purana Qila - his heart was moved by their plight.

Zakir Saheb was very sad about the situation in the country. About two months after independence, he expressed his views on All India Radio. He said, "protect your humanity. Don't let the right to civilised life of your community be lost. We protected the complete repository of civilisation, humanity and civility from the fire of conflicts and the storm of selfishness during the dark nights of slavery. You are reducing them to ashes. Don't do like this. Protect it and decide to devote your life to that loveable work the responsibility of which has been put on your shoulders with the grant of freedom. Remember, this work can never be completed with hands and hearts wrapped in the life of hatred. For this, love, trust and faith are required."

### **GANDHIJI'S BIRTHDAY IN JAMIA**

On Gandhiji's birthday, Zakir Saheb addressed the people of Jamia. At that time sound of machine gun fire was coming from the northern direction and there was threat of rioters laden with weapons from the southern side. Harassed and terror-stricken people were coming from the eastern side to seek shelter at Jamia. Zakir Saheb recollected the days of Gandhiji's deep relation with Jamia when Gandhiji was regarded as the true friend and sympathiser of Muslims. He referred to the period, when new friends and supporters of Muslims had come to the fore. Some people told Muslims that Gandhiji was the greatest enemy of the Muslims. This 'untruth' was spread widely so much so that some Muslims started believing in it. The reality was something different though. Zakir Saheb said, "you see that you have only one true, strong and cordial friend who is your supporter and protector. Today Muslims have accepted Gandhiji. Muslims may be anything, but are surely not grateful." Referring to the efforts made by Gandhiji and by the Government to stop riots and restore peace, Zakir Saheb assured the people of Jamia that Gandhiji's voice is surely going to make its impact. He said,

“nobody could imagine that hell would break loose and suddenly there would be uproar and tumult. However, now the Government is on the alert and is engaged in crushing this turmoil with all the strength. But you need not feel that the danger has been averted. The danger is still lurking and you may have to face a situation even worse than this. This fire can engulf the whole country. Don’t deceive yourselves, I don’t want to put you in the dark and give you assurances where you can sit back comfortably. I want to give you assurances where one is comfortable and is yet aware of the danger around him..... such delicate moments do come in the lives of the communities. These moments act as testing points put forth by the Nature. Now the question before you is either to pass through this test or escape it by running away. If your decision is to run away just do it. The doors of Pakistan are open, whoever wants to go can do so with pleasure. If your decision is to go past this test, stand firm on the ground here. But remember, it is very much possible that you might be killed. But this killing won’t go waste. Some murder make the marauders ashamed and the killed proud. Some deaths are more valuable than the whole life and help the decaying communities recover. They make falling communities stand on their feet. If the people of Jamia join those who are getting killed, they will be doing something very valuable than all other previous deeds.

Those who are prepared to welcome death, find ways to survive. It is not surprising that the vote of Indian Muslims which has been caught in the mire by wrong guidance may cross the waters by your trembling hands. It is not again surprising that God wants you to accomplish the task of Muslim organisations, the foundation of which is based on fear of God, love for His beings, loyalty for the countrymen and service to the countrymen. If not more, you set an example for the people of Delhi and instill the feeling of courage in them. The Muslims who are firmly settled in their localities are more comfortable than those who have fled. Because of them, Delhi will be saved. You take part in this endeavour.”



On the one hand, Zakir Saheb inculcated the feeling of courage, enthusiasm and hope amongst his colleagues, on the other the Prime Minister and Delhi Administration, because of the personality of Zakir Saheb, fully took care of the security of Jamia and Okhla village. One night, the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi himself came to Jamia. Licenses of about a dozen guns were distributed. Once the Prime Minister arrived there at midnight, saw security arrangements and left just before dawn. General Cariappa deputed a unit of Madras regiment for the security of Jamia Nagar. Gandhiji himself came to Jamia and encouraged the people there.

The number of robbed and plundered, wounded and helpless refugees was on the rise in Delhi. Their hearts were full of hatred and revenge because of what they had to go through and what they had to face. At that time it was necessary not only to rehabilitate them materially but also emotionally. The situation in Delhi was very bad, people were being looted, they were fleeing. Refugees were homeless and for Muslims life had become a burden. Those who had been living together for centuries, refused to recognise each other. The fire was set ablaze all around and Delhi had been converted into a large slaughter house. Zakir Saheb in his radio speech, reminded the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of their centuries old friendship giving a message of brotherhood, love and peace. He said, “brothers, friends, companions, I have deliberately used these three words. Nature makes man and man as brothers. It is nature’s creation that you and I were born in the same country . We are made of the same earth. We all return to this earth. We have been brought up on this earth and die in this. We, you and all own a part in its comforts and pains. Why are you bent on breaking ties, fostered by nature. Friends..... maintain friendliness. Don’t make enemies out of friends. Let friendship strengthen you bonds. Brothers! Be friends. Abide by the rights and responsibilities.”

Riots subsided a bit and the situation improved. Jamia started functioning. It started a community centre for the refugee children, youth and elderly persons coming from Pakistan. The objective was that they all should meet there, sit closely, eat together in order to create an atmosphere of love and friendship; the fire of hatred, may be extinguished; fear and dread from each other may end.

## **GANDHIJI'S FAST**

Gandhiji was constantly working for peace and tranquility. The last phase was his fast, which roused the feeling of guilt for the evil deeds in the consciousness of the whole country. In Delhi, not only in the inner colonies and local residents' and refugee settlement but almost everywhere an atmosphere of shame and penance was created. On January 13, 1948, the first day of fast, Zakir Saheb issued a statement regarding Gandhiji's fast which was actually the voice of all well meaning people. He said, "there is no doubt that your inner vision is your guide and you have made a call for the purification of the inner consciousness of the country men at the right time. God has granted you the determination and confidence which must have its impact; the faith, trust and righteousness which cannot deflect in adverse circumstances. God is with you, your success is certain and here are we, whose heads are bowed in shame — Free India has nothing to give to you except bitterness, harassment and misfortune!.... may God bless you to live to have the first glimpse of the Freedom for which you struggled through out your life. Despite all our lack of far sightedness and depravity, you still consider us worthy of all this. If anything can effect a total change in us, it is your confidence and trust in the fact that finally our basic moral virtues will make their impact.

## **GANDHIJI'S DEATH**

Gandhiji broke his fast after some days on the assurance of Government officials, leaders of different communities and social



workers. This had moral impact on people. The situation improved but slightly. But, Gandhiji was assassinated on January 30. Gandhiji's death was an irreparable loss for the country. For Zakir Saheb, the news of Gandhiji's death was very painful. He showed great patience and courage. Referring to Gandhiji in a meeting of the South Indian Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras, Zakir Saheb said, "all the good tasks received a jolt with the passing away of Bapu. When he was with us we could not have complete view of the expanse of his work. Now that he is no more, we can realise the vastness of his role, how he had known the essence of National life; how he could lay his *messiah* finger on our aching vein and what efforts he had made to wipe out everyone's grief! He did not want just freedom. He wanted to build a nation for a free life. He was the only one to realise that a nation on this earth is not just by governance alone. The real thing was not governance alone but the national life. If the national life is sick, the governance is spoiled and it spoils other things. It rots and causes national life to rot — it becomes a problem, cracks start showing and when the national life improves the starving and half-naked people in the dark night of slavery acquire the lamp of freedom. If you dress it up, governance improves, if you strengthen it governance is also strengthened.

Gandhiji wanted Ramrajya, so he spent all his life in making the nation good and virtuous. He restored the link between word and deed, which generally keeps breaking at places elsewhere. Whatever act he performed later, he tested them by the rules of truth and goodness, and after finding them pure, he stood firm on them and abided by them almost to the extent of sacrificing his life for the same. He pointed out to the faults of his colleagues and did not fear while doing so. Those who think, this voice is silenced, are on the wrong. This voice has been ingrained in every part of our national life. When we will falter on the path of truth it will warn us.

Whenever we will raise our hands to tyrannize others, it will stop them. If we ever try to suppress this voice and avoid listening to it by covering our ears, it will not stop chasing us. This will strike our hearts, we will not be at peace with ourselves and this voice will ultimately compel us to listen to it. If we suppress this, we can't be a true nation in the world. May God bless us not to suppress this voice."

On December 30, 1948, Zakir Saheb while presenting the annual report of Jamia in the meeting of Anjuman Jamia Millia Islamia requested this Anjuman not to re-elect him vice-chancellor. In his report, he said, "because of this 25 year old habit, I have naturally hesitation in asking for money from the Government, but when I felt my colleagues want the Government be requested for aid to enhance the salary of the staff and some responsible officials in the Government are also prepared to consider the request, I consulted Maulana Azad and wrote to the Ministry of Education. One year has passed and no decision has been taken yet. Perhaps the Government functions like this. Perhaps I have no influence in the Government. May be there has been some deficiency on my part in persuing the matter. I seek permission to make a personal request. I am a person with very limited capacity, I find I am less capable as compared to the determination, will power and resolve of my young colleagues regarding the future of Jamia. In addition, circumstances have kept me engaged in other work. For some reason, I want to continue this work. I was under the illusion till now that whatever I am doing outside is indirectly service to the Jamia. People are getting restless and dissatisfied by my work other than that of Jamia. I want that my plain speaking should pave the way for creative thinking." This request of Zakir Saheb was not accepted in the Anjuman meeting and he was re-elected Vice-Chancellor for another five years. In view of Zakir Saheb's busy schedule, it was also decided to make an appointment to the new post of the Pro-Vice Chancellor. The



Vice-Chancellor was authorised to make an appointment to the post according to his wishes. Zakir Saheb appointed Mujib Saheb to the post.

In the Anjuman meeting on November 4, 1952, Mujib Saheb was elected Vice-Chancellor, Abdul Majid Khwaja Saheb, Chancellor and a new post of Pro-Chancellor was created. Zakir Saheb was elected to this post for the supervision of the important activities of the managing committee of Jamia. When Abdul Khwaja Saheb passed away in 1962, Zakir Saheb was elected Chancellor who occupied this office till his death.

## VICE CHANCELLOR – ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

In 1947, India attained freedom after the partition of the country. Even the foundation of the Aligarh Muslim University was shaken. The reason was, when the Muslim League launched the movement for Pakistan, the League leaders made the Muslim University, the base of politics. Communalism reached its peak. When freedom was attained, Muslim League leaders ran away from there. The University was at that time seen with suspicion in free India. Nawab Ismail Khan was the Vice-Chancellor at that time. He was associated with the Muslim League so it was not possible for him to continue on the post of Vice-Chancellor.

Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru wanted Zakir Saheb to be the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University so as to infuse new life into it and fill it with national colours of free India and give it a shape of an institution for Muslims, which the secular country could be proud of and which in turn could become the centre of hope and aspirations for Muslim youth in the new India. Zakir Saheb enjoyed the confidence of both the Government and the people. It was not an easy task to manage the Muslim University at that time. For Zakir Saheb, it was not a bed of roses. It was a very difficult challenge. While accepting this challenge, he would have thought that strengthening the foundation of Aligarh was after all an extension of his duties for the Jamia—that of Jamia's role towards the nation. He would be able to bring Muslims closer to the national life. Zakir Saheb put a condition that he won't go there as a representative of the Government. Let the University Committee elect him unanimously.



The Aligarh Muslim University Committee met on November 28, 1948. In this meeting, Nawab Ismail Khan resigned from the post of Vice-Chancellor. Proposing the name of Zakir Saheb himself he said that only Zakir Saheb could now take care of this institution. The meeting accepted the resignation of Nawab Ismail and unanimously appointed Zakir Saheb the Vice-Chancellor. Two days later on November 30, 1948, Zakir Saheb took charge of the new post. On November 23, 1951, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor for six years for the second time under the new act of the Aligarh Muslim University.

When Zakir Saheb assumed the charge of the post of Vice-Chancellor, the condition of the University was very delicate. A number of teachers had already left for Pakistan. The number of students had sizably gone down. Those who were there, were very much disappointed. Zakir Saheb tried to change the atmosphere. He infused new zeal among the teachers. He made successful efforts to carry on a number of schemes. There was a ray of hope, after his arrival.

Not even a year had passed after he went to Aligarh, that he suffered a heart attack in October, 1949. He had to prepare some speeches for the Nagpur University. As was his habit, he kept on postponing this. Finally, the dates of delivering the lectures came near. To avoid visitors he went to Rashid Saheb's place to write the speeches. In the evening, Rashid Saheb and Zakir Saheb returned from a brief walk. Zakir Saheb stopped in the guest room while Rashid Saheb went inside. When he returned after some time he saw Zakir Saheb lying on the bedstead with his shervani on. When Rashid Saheb wanted to talk something Zakir Saheb told him in very clear words and in poised manner - "I am suffering a heart attack. I felt as if I am breathing my last. I wanted to call you then thought, why in haste, whatever is to happen, will happen. You also might be coming back." Rashid Saheb was just amazed at the philosophical expression of Zakir Saheb.

Zakir Saheb recovered after six weeks. Because of this second heart attack and the fear of chronic diabetes he was compelled to obey the medical advice and instructions of the doctors. Similarly he accepted the strict vigil of Is-hak his special attendant. Zakir Saheb may not have liked these restrictions, as he could neither work nor take food according to his wishes.

Zakir Saheb got fully involved in taking the university on the path of progress. He gave a national character to the University and also tried his best to link it with the national consciousness. With the objective of meeting the shortage of good teachers, he encouraged the promising students, granted them scholarships, and sent them to Europe for higher studies. This way he prepared a team of good teachers from the University itself. The image of the university started improving fast after the arrival of Zakir Saheb in Aligarh. Every work reflected regularity, refinement and an aesthetic sense. Special attention was being given to buildings, students hostels, roads etc. A number of new buildings were also constructed. Parks were built. The colourful flower beds welcomed passers by. In no time the garden of the University was ready. This change had its impact on the common man also. People raised gardens in their houses. The whole township around the University turned into a garden laden with flowers.

Zakir Saheb always had deep interest in the work related to the Aligarh Muslim University as he was educated there and secondly because this institution had preserved in itself a long tradition of knowledge civilisation and culture of the Indian Muslims. Before being appointed as Vice-Chancellor, Zakir Saheb had taught in the Department of Economics. He had been a member of the University court, executive council, academic council (management and educational council) and in this capacity, he had been striving to raise the educational standard of the University and to better the environment there. Zakir Saheb was anxious for the promotion and progress of the Muslim



University even at the time when the University came under the influence of the Muslim League and the atmosphere had been vitiated so much so that even greatest of the ex-students, if he was not the supporter of the Muslim League, could not deliver a speech in the University campus. Even Zakir Saheb who occupied a very high place among the worthy products of the University, could not deliver a speech there. It was not an easy task for Zakir Saheb to conserve the tradition of education, culture and knowledge in the university. After independence, so many things were spread against the university. So many things were being said to bring bad name to the University, its teachers and students and to brand them as traitors. People started enjoying all this. In 1950-51, the continuous campaign to malign the Muslim University was at its peak. Acharya Vinoba Bhave visited the university. Zakir Saheb organised his reception in 'Stretchi hall' and then making him a witness took the critics and enemies of the university to task in strongest of words. Only Zakir Saheb could do this. Zakir Saheb's contribution to the well being of the university at that time, could be assessed only by those who had seen the bad days of the institution.

## CONVOCATION

On the occasion of convocation of the University, President Dr. Rajendra Prasad arrived (in Aligarh). It was in his presence that Zakir Saheb referred to the sad plight of the University and to his responsibilities in the making of a new Aligarh. Hinting at the persons maligning the university and the difficulties emanating thereof, he said, "people with narrow outlook and dirty mind generally create a lot of difficulties in the work. Memory of communal struggle in our national life gives opportunity to these persons with narrow vision to convince people with their false statement. The general public, our newspapers and our workers seem to be ready to accept even the false things spread by the people. I understand the reason behind their attitude but don't accept it to be correct. As an Indian, I consider it my duty to

frustrate this thinking so that the Muslim citizens feel that they are not alien to this country. This feeling of being alien produces sense of despair, disappointment and dejection. This is neither good for the Muslims nor for the country. A great task, the task of creating a decent national life is before the country. The way Aligarh will work, think and serve in the various fields of Indian lives, will determine the place of Muslims in the nationalistic life of India.

## UNIVERSITY ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS

During Zakir Saheb's tenure, all the departments in the University recorded progress. New and able persons were appointed. Science was promoted, keeping in view its importance. Zakir Saheb got a number of research projects approved by the Government. New building was constructed for the engineering college. Even the plan to open a medical college was formulated at that time. The foundation of Aligarh University library was laid by Nehruji during Zakir Saheb's tenure and it is now known as Maulana Azad Library. On this occasion, Zakir Saheb said in his speech, "how fortunate am I that I have had the privilege to welcome the beloved and honoured guest, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, to this university. But this privilege involves an arduous assignment. A formal welcome can find expression somehow in words. But when the dark, heavily laden clouds of the monsoon flock over the parched, thirsty earth, and every particle of its soil begins to pulsate with some hidden current of life, the earth does not welcome the clouds with any form of speech. When the desolate autumn has gone and the spring forces the sap through the vein of the plants, buds hesitantly and timorously peep through the branches to welcome the spring breeze and burst open with sheer joy, these plants do not look for words of welcome to express their passionate urge for blossoming. And when the first bird of the spring caravan enters the garden, the entire scene is wreathed in smiles and yet laughter finds no utterances in words. The human being even in



these moments, is so foolish as to forget the wise counsel that such colourful sentiment should find expression only through the eyes. He aspires to say something in words and is then utterly ashamed at his incapacity. I, too, simple and foolish as I am, have stood up to express my feeling in suitably eloquent words, but I know I shall fail. Still, I hope Panditji will understand what I want to say.”

The efforts made for the University library showed slow success. The plan of the new building was formulated under the supervision of Professor Syed Bashiruddin. The foundation was laid by Panditji. Professor Syed Bashiruddin visited Europe and America to study the famous libraries and the training system of library science there. Thus the relationship of the university got established with the famous libraries of the world, the important libraries of Princeton, Chicago, Berkeley etc., other than the libraries of the Congress and the British Museum. A new section was set up for the hand written articles and the manuscripts and its catalogue prepared after hard work. Later, collection of the photostat copies of the manuscript, various royal decrees and coins were made and kept in the library.

In view of the importance of science, Zakir Saheb gave special attention to science. P.S. Gill, the noted scientist of the country was called to Aligarh. Research work on nuclear physics was started under his guidance in the physics Department. Dr. Abdul Basir Khan had returned after obtaining degree from Canada that very year (1948). The Department of Biology was started under his supervision and a new section of para psychology was opened. Bio-chemical section in Chemistry Department was also opened. For the laboratory of the Engineering College, fifteen lakh rupees were allocated and a regular grant of two to two and a half lakh rupees was also sanctioned.

A Department was started in the university for research in Islamic knowledge and the civilisation, social condition and

culture in the Middle East. Professor Abdul Alim was appointed its Director. Zakir Saheb also accompanied him during his visit to the countries of the Middle East. Three professors for this Department were requisitioned from different countries and this Department was expanded on the basis of new trends prevailing in the area of learning. Professor Syed Hussain Taki Zada had come as visiting professor from Iran. He was honoured with Doctor of Letters. Later Syed Nafisi came as professor from Iran. A magazine was also published by this institution, called Institute of Islamic Studies. Writing and Research work also started.

Publication of a number of books from the various Departments of the university had started during Zakir Saheb's period. Professor Nurul Hasan was engaged in preparation of a book which dealt with varied aspects of the period of Akbar. A special research project on medieval Indian History was started for the History Department with the help of grant from U.G.C. A magazine entitled Medieval India was started from this very Department. In the Department of Political Science, important work of translation was accomplished. *Fatawa-e-Jahadari*, written by the noted scholar Ziauddin Burney was translated and edited. Research work on the politics of oil in the Middle East and political view point of Mughal Kingdom was also taken up.

The third composition of the Persian Department was edited by Dr. Siddiqui. Dr. Hadi Sahen translated *Shakuntala* of Kalidas in Persian. His translated articles were published by Hukumat-e-Hind-O-Iran and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The editing and presentation of variable Persian manuscripts and the translation of the best books of Parisian into Indian languages started. Five important books of the Department were published. In addition, the work on Aligarh History of Urdu literature was started. Zakir Saheb's classmate and friend Mr. Ataullah Khan Durrani gave a grant of seven and a half lakh rupees, which was utilized in collecting material on 'Nawal



Kishore', under the Syed Hussain Research scheme. Its Hindi translation was also planned. A section was set up for research on handwritten manuscript of the Hindi and Sanskrit Department. Research work and M.A. in Hindi was also started. This was made a separate Department. It was during this period that the translation work of the poetry of great Urdu poets in Hindi and research work on 'Bhakti kaal' were planned.

In the Department of Economics, the services of the noted and experienced expert of the country Dr. Mukherjee, were obtained. The U.G.C. provided sufficient assistance for research in various Departments of Science. In the Department of Botany, research work was done on diseases relating to sugarcane, mango and paddy. Research work was conducted on Raniganj coal by the Department of Geology and on cosmic rays etc., in Physics. A new Centre was opened for General Education. Diploma Courses were started in Business Administration and Steno typing etc. Common Rooms, Study Rooms and Libraries were set up a new in the hostels.

Meanwhile, the University Grant Commission gave financial grants to the Aligarh Muslim University for the various plans and schemes. In addition, the Centre and the State Government increased the regular grant to the University. The Centre raised the amount to twelve and a half lakh rupees from three lakh rupees and the State Government to three lakh from sixty thousand rupees. The grant given by the Centre for equipment etc to the Aligarh Muslim Girls College and Engineering College was in addition to this. When Zakir Saheb came to Aligarh, the budget of the University was of almost thirteen lakh rupees, but when he left Aligarh, it was about fifty four lakh rupees.

A number of books of high order were published during Zakir Saheb's tenure. Importance of research work was considered in various Departments. The main reason was that Zakir Saheb always encouraged each and every Department to

go ahead with the research work. He would somehow arrange money for the success of the schemes. And if he could not, he would pay from his pocket.

## **NEW RESPONSIBILITIES**

Zakir Saheb had to shoulder several other responsibilities along with the works related to the University. He was a Member of the University Education Commission, President of the Hindustani Shiksha Sangh from 1938 to 1950, Member of the University Grant Commission from 1952 to 1957, President of the World University Services, Geneva, from 1950 to 1957 and Member of the Indian Press Commission from 1952 to 1954. He was the Member of the UNESCO Executive Board from 1956 to 1958, President of the Central Board of Secondary Education till 1952 and member of the Rajya Sabha from 1952 to 1957. He was also the President of the Anjuman Taraqui Hindu and Muslim Education Conference. He was honoured with Padma Vibhushan in 1954.

Zakir Saheb served the Aligarh Muslim University with great earnestness. On the one hand, he raised the standard of education by reforming its educational structure, and on the other hand he enhanced the glory of the Aligarh Muslim University and restored its lost glory. Zakir Saheb accomplished the greatest by encouraging the feeling of nationalism there. It was his heart-felt wish that people from every religion, caste and colour and race, speaking varied languages live together at this centre of education and set up a new ideal. When the communal elements shot arrows of doubt and suspicion at the University, Zakir Saheb acted as a shield and gave them an irrefutable reply. Referring to the newspapers maligning the University, he said, “I relent the ignorance of our nation. The press of my country is so boorish and ignorant that it does not spare even such an educational institution from maligning from which the nation has to accomplish a lot of work. Situation will improve slowly. The most important thing is that we should mould ourselves in such a manner that no



one can malign us. Then, those engaged in malinging will themselves be maligned and our hearts will remain aloft.” The atmosphere of Aligarh changed with the efforts put in by Zakir Saheb and the influence of his personality. The example in this regard was the Union election in 1951. There were two candidates for the post of Vice-President. One of them was known to be of communal views. The other was of liberal views and was accused even of being a Communist. His name was Syed Inayat Hussain Aftab. When election was held, Inayat Hussain won by a big margin.

Zakir Saheb had often indicated in his speeches as to what major works of national importance had to be completed in Aligarh and said that he had already dedicated his life to fulfil this objective. On August 17, 1952 he said on the occasion of a dinner at V.M. hall – “My whole life has been linked with Aligarh. It was here that I studied and grew up into a mature being and now I am serving it. I was even turned out from here during my student days. After that we took care of the work of Jamia. I understand, even that was the job of Aligarh. I never thought of Aligarh and Jamia as separate entities. With this very objective in mind I am working on the Aligarh reforms movement. I also take it as an important service to the nation. Building a national character was the biggest requirement and friends, name of those who accomplish this work, will be entered in the list of benefactors. I want my name also to figure in that list.”

Addressing the annual session of the Muslim Education Conference, Zakir Saheb said about the Muslim University, “The love, labour, wealth, their enthusiasm and compassion of Hindus and Muslims have built it. If we achieve this in the national life, which I understand every Muslim wants, it will be a matter of pride for Muslims.” Two important changes were made in the rules of the University Court during that period. First, that not only Muslim but Hindus will also be Members of Theology

University Court. Second, that the education of the *Diniyat* will not be compulsory. This change was made on the recommendation of the University Grant Commission for both Banaras and Aligarh. Some people misunderstood it, but its objective was not to change the structure of the University but that these institutions could secure the cooperation of others while maintaining their unique character. The other change was essential because the institutions, which received grants from the government according to the Constitution, could not compel any student for religious education.

## ARRIVAL OF V.I.Ps

After Zakir Saheb's arrival at Aligarh Muslim University, a number of guests from different countries started coming to Aligarh. Congress President H.N. Dhebar came to Aligarh on August 19, 1955. Addressing the students, he said, "My impression about Aligarh was somewhat wrong before my visit. When I saw things here, those misconceptions have gone. This big institution has all the opportunities to strengthen democracy. This University has maintained its glory in the Country by always producing people of extraordinary talent." The Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt Commander General Salim visited the University on September 13. The Vice President of Indonesia, Dr. Muhammad Hatta arrived in Aligarh on October 29 along with his party. On November 8 the Sri Lankan envoy, Sarratna Adon left with the fond feelings of Aligarh. Pandit Nehru laid the foundation of the University Library and Saifi Hostel on November 12. A grand reception was accorded to Pandit Nehru. He was very much impressed by the atmosphere of Aligarh. The Sultan of Arab (Saudi Arabia) came to Aligarh on December 3. On the occasion, Zakir Sahib dwelt upon the brief history of Aligarh, Indo-Arab relations and the prevalent situation in Aligarh.

The Shah of Iran and Queen Suraiya arrived in Aligarh on February 26, 1956. Even the Aligarh station was decorated on



this occasion; the atmosphere in Aligarh University was worth seeing. All sorts of colourful gates were erected with 'Shah Javed welcome', 'Long live Shahensha', 'Hail Indo-Iran Unity' etc. written in Urdu and Hindi on them. Zakir Saheb delivered the welcome address. He narrated the story of the relations between India and Iran. Expressing his inner feelings, he said, "The character of Indian Muslims will be built through education in Aligarh and its message and accomplishment thereof and they will fill the colour of grandeur and beauty in the beautiful picture of modern India by putting in the efforts of their mind and body/health and soul."

The Shah of Iran was so impressed with the atmosphere of Aligarh that during his speech in Union Hall, he said, "I wish, I were again a student of twenty and selected Aligarh as the seat of learning."

## SEMINARS

It was during that very period that an important National Seminar of the World University service was held in Aligarh. Twenty six universities participated in it. This led to the recognition of the importance of Aligarh not only in India but in the whole world. The international Geographical Seminar was held in Aligarh from January 9 to 17 in 1956, under the auspices of the University Grant Commission. This was attended by sixty five delegates from eighteen countries. This was the first seminar on Geography on such a large scale in the world. Flags of all these countries were hoisted opposite the Stretchi hall. The flags of Indian universities were unfurled on both sides of the road just in the front. The Uttar Pradesh Governor K.M. Munshi came to Aligarh on January 28 and was very much impressed by the working and structure of the University. On January 19, the All-India Vice-Chancellors Conference was held in the Stretchi Hall, under the presidentship of Zakir Saheb. The Vice-Chancellors of all the universities in the country attended the Conference which discussed the problems relating to higher

education at that time. Zakir Saheb was of the view that Aligarh had a special objective before it after Independence and the experiments of national unity were being conducted there, keeping this very objective in view.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The actual task of Aligarh is to lighten the dark corners of politics in the country by encasing the different forms of religion, language and culture in a new mould. Students belonging to all religions and castes come here from every nook and corner of India. Students from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), Sri Lanka, Iraq, Pakistan, Africa, Egypt, Sudan etc., come in large numbers to receive education. The methodology of religious and cultural consonance was started in the University. Cultural programmes, functions of composite music and drama etc. were also organized on the occasion of various Indian festivals. All took part in them. Similar programmes and colourful functions were organized in hostels also. The Education Department on behalf of the Government of India started annual youth festival in which all the universities used to participate. In March 1956, a cultural committee was formed for the cultural programmes. Arrangement was made also to teach music to the students. Aligarh Muslim University students also started participating in the youth festivals.

## VISIT TO ARAB COUNTRIES

In May 1956, Zakir Saheb, colonel Bashir Saheb Zaidi and Nawab of Chattari arrived in Saudi Arabia on the invitation of Shah Saud. They were there for about fifteen days. Shah Ibne Saud donated ten lakh rupees for the Aligarh Medical College. From Riyadh, they arrived in Mecca Sharif via Jeddah on the night of May 29. Arriving at Haram Sharif (Kaaba), they first offered *humra* (Prayer to be offered on arrival at Kaaba). Maulana Karam Ali was conducting the visit of the members of the delegation to various places in



Kaaba. He went on invoking blessing and having them repeated in Arabic. At last, Zakir Saheb told him, "Maulana, you have sought enough blessings in Arabic, now let me seek some in Hindi. At this all started laughing, even the Maulana. On arrival of the delegation of the University, they were felicitated there. Welcome address was presented by the Indian friends living there. Zakir Saheb delivered a very good speech in reply, which contained valuable message for Indian Muslims. Zakir Saheb arrived in Madina from there and then left for Germany.

## DISASTER IN UNIVERSITY

The American book "Religious Leaders" published by Vidya Bhavan, Bombay had angered the Muslims. Anti-social elements helped in spreading the disturbance in the University and even among the school children. All this was done on August 31, 1956 in a very odd manner. Zakir Saheb became very sad with students getting incited. Communal and anti-social elements created a situation of disturbance in the town. The newspapers got an opportunity to indulge in publicity against Aligarh. Zakir Saheb expelled twenty seven students from the University. Much earlier Zakir Saheb had decided to submit his resignation. A meeting was also held to consider his resignation letter. On August 11, 1956, Zakir Saheb was requested to withdraw his resignation. He did not change his decision and his resignation was accepted in the first week of September. He was very distressed by the activities in the University and the allegations levelled by both the communities. The incident of August 31, 1956, further saddened him. His heart broke altogether. He had already completed almost eight years in the service of the University. Heart ailment had further weakened him. Small quarrels kept on erupting now and then but this disturbance was inflamed by the newspapers and people. The University was also maligned.

## **SPEECH AT THE UNION HALL**

Zakir Saheb in his farewell speech at the Union Hall said, “Mr. President and friends, let me first accept the dilemma I faced in coming here. I did not want to trouble you. But I came just because my absence might create some misunderstanding. In fact, I was faced with this dilemma as I did not want to express my shock and disappointment which was because of your behaviour. I am disappointed because you still lack maturity. Anybody can lead you astray. Anybody can excite you and incite your feelings. You are like those sheep, which can be driven away by anybody. You have still not learnt to exercise your intelligence in respect of feelings. You are free. Your institution is free. But you have not learnt to pay the price of freedom. Freedom has a price to struggle incessantly for it. The freedom is achieved daily and its price has also to be paid daily. Everyday you perform some act, which forms the basis of your being worthy or unworthy of that freedom. Freedom does not come to anybody for good. Thank God, it may be late, but not never. You will definitely feel sorry for whatever you did. Just now your President said that he considered organization of protests, demonstrations and processions as a matter of low standard. But you did all this. I don’t say only you did all this. If someone says something against you, you immediately get excited. Anybody can make you lose your senses; can incite your feelings. You bring out processions, raise slogans, what is this after all? This is not the behaviour of educated ones. The intelligent is one who does not lose control over his feelings and intellect, one who is able to hear criticism against him and one who is able to answer any objections with a cool mind. You had taken out the funeral of the Munshi which you must have realised later is not something praiseworthy. It was only yesterday that your President brought him here with great respect, made him the life member of the Union and praised



him more than you praised me. How should I rely on what you said in my praise. Who knows tomorrow you might hold my funeral. Whatever you say should have substance.

If there are any arguments not in favour of Rasoolullah you must be able to refute it. During the time of the founder of this Institution (Sir Sayyid), a book was written by Sir William More, where He was not portrayed favorably. Sir Sayyid sold all his belongings, even the house-hold utensils and left for a long journey to London so that he could write a book after studying all the material there. He was an old man; such a long journey was painful for him and was also not familiar with the language of that country. But that old man was more enamoured of Mohammed Saheb than I am. He understood all these difficulties and wrote a book which can even today be offered to those making false charges against the Rasoolullah.... 'Khutbate Ahmedia' is even today regared a standard book on the life of Rasoolullah. This is the way to refute charges. He did not raise any slogan, did not bring out anybody's funeral, nor said 'Murdabad' for anybody... Whatever has happened is past now; you must have regrets now, I also have. Still I am with you and what else can be done. If one of my hands is not healthy, I cannot cut it out with my other hand. It is with your support and goodwill that I spent eight years here so well and with enthusiasm. I am grateful to you but in the end while putting in you best of efforts, you also tried to create disturbances! I wish you to be good citizens of the country. You are destined to hold the high places, and not adhere to the ground, which is a place only for squalor and petty problems. You should have firm determination, not to take rest before making your University, the best one in the country.

On September 16, Zakir Saheb came to Delhi from Aligarh. Appreciating the service of Zakir Saheb, it was mentioned in the Annual Report, 1957 of the Aligarh Muslim University, "He faced situations with great courage. With full dedication and support of his colleagues and students he was able to steer the

boat through stormy waters successfully and with great self-confidence. Because of his dedication to the objective, deep insight into problems relating to education, sympathetic understanding of the difficulties of teachers and students, and human approach to all problems, he continued to be the source of zeal and zest for all the students and the staff of the University. The council will always remember the valuable services of Zakir Saheb with great affection and gratitude, and will continue with untiring struggle for the success and upkeep of the values in which he believed.”

The mouthpiece journal of the University ‘Aling’ wrote on September 10, 1956, “Zakir Saheb gave this institution a new life, and a new consciousness; gave a lively style of thinking, inculcated the spirit of love, affection and selfless social service. He taught the style of work to the country by making Aligarh a model of free India on a small scale; taught the habit of sacrifice, sympathy and not to suffer hurdle in any task, spirit to sacrifice everything for the sake of truth, passion to alter death into life, devotion to work better than others, zest to live in style and with honour, and the spirit of keeping up the morale to convert the impossible into possible thus rendering another life to this historical institution.



## GOVERNOR OF BIHAR

**A**fter his return from Aligarh, Zakir Saheb stayed in Jamia for some days. Later he went to participate in Germany and Switzerland Conference. After the Conference, he underwent treatment there, which was necessary from the point of view of his health. The UNESCO session was held in Delhi at the end of 1956. The then Education Minister Maulana Azad invited him to be a member of the Indian delegation and Zakir Saheb accepted the offer readily. Maulana Azad was no doubt the leader of the delegation but Zakir Saheb did all the work relating to the leadership of the delegation. Delegates from other countries were very impressed by him. He was appointed the member of the UNESCO Executive Board. Zakir Saheb went to Cairo Conference on behalf of UNESCO to know about the position of education in Arab countries and where he represented the UNESCO as educational expert. He had to go to Paris to attend the meeting of the Executive Board. He stayed there for about six weeks. In between he went to Germany and paid attention to his treatment also. Maulana Azad told Zakir Saheb to accept the post of Governor, but he did not agree. While Zakir Saheb was in Germany and Switzerland, Pandit Nehru wrote to him saying that he had already submitted his name for the post of Governor. So Zakir Saheb should accept the post and not reject it. He could not disagree with Panditji and his name was announced as Governor of Bihar in May 1957.

Zakir Saheb assumed the charge of Governor on July 7, 1957. He always kept himself aloof from active politics. There is always a conflict between political expectations and moral values. While working for Basic National Education, Zakir Saheb had seen people working in political field from close quarters. In

real politics, one has sometimes to sacrifice reality and truth at the altar of party's political interests. This was impossible for an idealistic teacher like Zakir Saheb. Zakir Saheb's health was also not allowing him to join active politics. He had already suffered heart attack. He was also suffering from diabetes. His eyes were affected by glaucoma and under these conditions also, Zakir Saheb wanted to serve the country. On the other hand, Panditji was also very insistent. So, he felt that by accepting the post of Governor, he would be able to serve the country in one way or the other.

Zakir Saheb arrived in Raj Bhavan as Governor of Bihar. On that very evening, he addressed the people of Bihar as brothers and sisters, and expressed his desire to seek their blessings for carrying on his new assignment. He began his address with reference to Bihar Minister Shri Anugrah Narain Sinha, who had expired on that very day and because of differences with the chief minister, there was an atmosphere of confrontation. He praised Anugrah Narain Sinha's long service to the nation and said his untimely death was a big loss to the country. He said "a living nation never forgets its great sons, and completes the work, left incomplete by them. The life of the departed leader is exhorting us to take a vow to build this state into an ideal state and a beloved state of India." He said, "I have come from Bihar's neighboring state Uttar Pradesh and in 1927, when I had come here to collect donation for Jamia Millia alongwith Hakim Ajmal Khan, the people here were the first to rise to the occasion." Zakir Saheb delivered his first speech in such an informal and touching way that the people of Bihar felt, as if, they knew Zakir Saheb for years.

Zakir Saheb settled in Raj Bhavan in Patna as Governor. This period of his life was of some satisfaction and peace. Life was disciplined and every work was predetermined. He also got physical rest which he needed for long, because his past life had



been strenuous. Most of his time as Governor was spent in presiding over meetings, inaugurating various institutions and meeting people. His interest in education continued. He kept on giving advice in the working of Bihar University. It was because of him that a number of complexities in the field of education, were solved easily.

### **ADDRESS IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Zakir Saheb had to address the Bihar Legislative Assembly every year. This used to throw light on the functioning of the government of Bihar. In March 1958, Zakir Saheb throwing light on the programmes of the government of Bihar, referred to Kosi Project and presented a blue print of proposed developmental programmes and policies. In one of his speeches in February 1959, he emphasised the need of raising agriculture production. He said, "in order to raise production, we all have to work hard with dedication. The dream of national reconstruction and progress can be achieved only if we make all efforts to raise production." He also mentioned flood control measures, setting up of Steel Plant and heavy industries and education-related issues.

### **KHUDABAKSH LIBRARY**

While in Patna, Zakir Saheb's attention was drawn by the precious 'Khudabaksh' Library there. This library is considered the treasure house of the invaluable books of the world. During that period, he also visited the famous library of Waisina. The books there faced the threat of being destroyed. Zakir Saheb said these treasured books be sent to the 'Khudabaksh Library'.

### **ACTIVITIES IN RAJ BHAVAN**

The life style of Zakir Saheb in Patna Raj Bhavan was simple as usual. Once on the occasion of some festival, a party was arranged for the officials of Raj Bhavan, in which every official irrespective of designation was invited. When the

celebrations were over, Zakir Saheb thanked every body by shaking hands. It was something new there which continued to be discussed for many years. When Zakir Saheb was departing from Raj Bhavan, a bodyguard of the Raj Bhavan said with tears in his eyes “I never saw a great Governor like Zakir Saheb. While accompanying him, I would feel as if I am the Governor and Zakir Saheb my bodyguard”.

Once Maulana Abdul Majid Dariabadi came to Patna as a guest of the Governor of Bihar. The Governor's ADC went to receive him in a car. Maulana expressed surprise on seeing the car, as the vehicle looked a bit strange despite being a superior car. As soon as he took his seat, he felt it somewhat cloistered. Silk curtains were hanging on the window panes in the front and the sides in such a way that they could not be fully lifted. When the ADC saw him a bit amazed, he said that this car was not for Zakir Saheb but for his Begum Sahiba.

## **RANCHI RAJ BHAVAN**

As Governor, Zakir Saheb lived mostly at Raj Bhavan in Patna. But during summer he used to go to Ranchi. The weather there was very good. Ranchi Raj Bhavan was smaller but very beautiful, especially the garden and weather and proper upkeep of the garden added to its beauty. Zakir Saheb very much liked this place. He was very fond of gardening to the extent that whenever he heard about any beautiful garden, he wished to visit it whether it was a garden of flowers or fruits. People were aware of Zakir Saheb's fondness. They would invite him to see a new garden and Zakir Saheb would always reciprocate their gesture. In Ranchi he went to see Geelani Saheb's garden. He became friendly with Khan Bahadur Syed Hasan Khan in Patna because of his fondness for gardens.

While living in Raj Bhavan, Zakir Saheb turned more polite and humble. He lived in that grand building in the same manner as some tourist was staying in a hotel.



The people of Bihar were so impressed by his simplicity that they remember it even today. While welcoming Zakir Saheb in Rajya Sabha, the words of reverence and respect used by Bihar members Babu Ganga Sharan Singh and Ram Dhari Singh 'Dinkar' showed how deeply the people of Bihar loved him. Addressing him, Babu Ganga Sharan Singh said, "Despite not being close to you, I was impressed by you. And the impression you left on our State, are such that the people of Bihar feel their own representative has left Bihar for Delhi. When there were political upheavals for five years and all sorts of conspiracies and deadlocks were taking place it was not an easy task for the person to win over the trust of everybody, get people's affection and be popular among all under the prevalent circumstances."

## VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

The third General Elections were held in 1962 and the Congress got majority. The then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru decided that Zakir Saheb should be the Vice President of India. Dr. Radhakrishnan, who was not aware of Panditji's intention, favoured Vijay Lakshmi Pandit for the post of Vice-President. In other circles also, her name was being supported. When Zakir Saheb met Pandit Nehru, the latter told him, "the post of office of Vice-President will be only given to you." According to Vijay Lakshmi Pandit herself, "I told Bhai (Panditji) that you cannot think of a better candidate than Zakir Saheb and I also wished this way. Soon as his name was announced, I went to him. He hugged me with tearful eyes and said (sister, today it would have been better, had I congratulated you)." All the three Dr. Radhakrishnan (President), Dr. Zakir Hussain (Vice President) and Panditji (Prime Minister) joined hands to develop the beautiful picture of the country and bring to light its composite culture. The Congress party proposed the name of Zakir Saheb and Dr. Radhakrishnan (for the post of Vice-President and President respectively). The election was held on May 7. Zakir Saheb received 568 votes while his rival got 14. Zakir Saheb arrived in India on May 13, 1962. He went to Rashtrapati Bhavan to call on Dr. Rajendra Prasad who was retiring after twelve years. He also attended his farewell in the evening.

### OATH TAKING CEREMONY

The oath taking ceremony was held on May 13, 1963, in the Central Hall of the Parliament. First, Dr. Radhakrishnan took the oath of the office of President followed by Zakir Hussain (taking the oath of the office of Vice-President). On this



occasion, Dr. Radhakrishnan in his speech referred to the problems confronting the nation, the condition of the people and expectations of a Republic Nation. Later Dr. Rajendra Prasad, at the end of his speech, congratulated the people for electing an able person like Zakir Saheb as Vice-President. He said, "he is a great scholar, has a creative mind and is an education expert of high order. He has come to accomplish the new task, after gaining vast experience in different fields. I offer him my heart-felt felicitations."

In addition to other works the most important work of the Vice-President is to preside over the Rajya Sabha. This needs a lot of patience as he has to deal with all sorts of people. The difficulties faced by the Chairman in maintaining harmonious atmosphere amidst the assaults and attacks between the government and the opposition, need a lot of patience, tolerance and far sightedness. Zakir Saheb had all these virtues. Assaults would be mounted in the Rajya Sabha, escape routes were sought and matter resolved. The never ending cold war would go on. Referring to the scenes in Rajya Sabha Dr. Tarachand had said in *Nazre Zakir*, "In this situation, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, explains/tries to make the people understand, seeks better style and attitudes. He makes the participating member understand and sometimes even flatters him. What should he do if all these measures fail? The stubborn and haughty member keeps on speaking, continuously moving his hands. He is bent on speaking, does not listen to the Chairman, and then there is an atmosphere of chaos. Shouts and counter shouts begin. Member starts speaking and accusing each and therefore the level of the sound of order—order getting louder."

Zakir Saheb presided over the Rajya Sabha with a high sense of dignity, courage and boldness. Sometimes, his mental peace was disturbed but still he always functioned with dignity. This was why when he left his assignment, the representatives of all groups expressed trust and faith in him.

June 14, 1962 was the first day of Zakir Saheb presiding over the Rajya Sabha. After the formal announcement of setting of the houses, the government announced holiday for Moharram on June 14. When the Members assembled, Zakir Saheb said, "I have been told that holiday for Moharram is an important religious holiday and the House should be adjourned. I think, all Members subscribe to this view. So I propose that the proceedings of the House be suspended today."

On June 15, announcement was made to start the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha. Members of various parties welcomed the new Chairman and said that he would adopt the standards of dignity, justice and impartiality set up by the former Chairman (Dr. Radhakrishnan) in running the House. The Members were aware of the political views of the new Chairman and his old relations with the Congress. Members of the opposition said in their welcome address that the opposition should be given full opportunity to express their views. All the Members who spoke on that day, expressed happiness over the election of Zakir Saheb as Vice-President. Atal Behari Vajpayee in his welcome address said, "It is a matter of great pleasure that when a wave of communalism is sweeping the country, and many stalwarts failed in establishing secular traditions at that time, you are following the path shown by the Father of the Nation. We have already set up a secular government in which there is no place for discrimination on the basis of religion. You have given strength to the ideals of secularism by your words and deeds. Now as you are Vice-President and occupying high office of a democratic government, we will continue to receive your guidance."

In his reply Zakir Saheb spoke in his typical style, "It is just not feasible for me to thank you for the kind and magnanimous gesture shown by you while welcoming me. You have named a number of qualities in me but I am not sure whether I really deserve a praise for it or not. I really wish that some of these



qualities were there in me. I am also faced with the fact that the present post held by me, has already been adorned by a great stalwart who is the present President of India. So, at this moment you can very well imagine my feelings. Anyhow, whatever tradition has been established in this House under his leadership, I hope I can guard it but only when I get full support and cooperation from you. I do trust that I will not be deprived of this cooperation from you.

After my election, I have been receiving tens and thousands of congratulatory letters and telegrams. The maximum number of such letters were from the teachers — primary school teachers from far flung areas of the country, high school teachers and University teachers. I feel I am being considered worthy of this respect because of my close association with the work in the field of education. And if this nation has been able to give due importance to education then it can be easily said that education is the soul of our democracy. Any nation like ours which is old as well as new at the same time, will consider education alone as a special creative drive working in our lives. Education can critically analyse our great inheritance and can help us identifying that element which is beneficial and that which is going to create hurdle in the long run. It helps us to identify which part of inheritance we should safe-guard and which part we should neglect and ignore. And after all it is education alone which can give us a glimpse of the future for which we are striving to achieve or which we are endeavouring to achieve. The fact that you have chosen me who was a school teacher, as the Vice-President of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha is a pointer that education has been a subject of national importance. Despite my own limitations, which I am fully aware of, I am very happy that my nation has rightly visualised the role of education in the national life.”

Behaviour according to occasion was Zakir Saheb's specialty and because of this, people were very much impressed

by Zakir Saheb. Wherever he went, he spoke about the history and culture of the country. While occupying the office of Vice President, he played an important role in consolidating world peace, cooperation, economic prosperity and international relations. After the liberation of Goa, the Ministry was formed for the first time there. On December 20, 1963, Zakir Saheb initiated the oath-taking ceremony. He expressed his happiness over the peaceful elections in Goa and upon the fact that the Center granted the citizens of Goa their right to govern the state just within two years of its liberation.

Zakir Saheb discharged the duties of the President also from February 22, 1964 because of the illness of Dr. Radhakrishnan. He delivered his inaugural address in the Parliament first in Hindi and then in English. The speech highlighted various problems and difficulties confronting the country. In addition, progress of scientific research in the country, information regarding discovery of oil fields, details of new schemes, shortage in production, formation of Ministry in Goa-Daman Diu, formation of Nagaland, threat from China, deployment of Chinese forces on the border, foreign tours of the Vice President to the United States, Britain and Russia, visit of foreign guests, freedom of Uganda and Kenya, death of the U.S. President Kennedy, relations with Pakistan, border agreement between China and Pakistan etc. were mentioned.

The Diamond Jubilee of the School, in which Zakir Saheb had studied, was celebrated in 1963. Zakir Saheb went to Etawah as Chief Guest. His attention was drawn towards the School in the felicitation paper. Referring to his deep affection for the Islamia School, Etawah, Zakir Saheb said, "How can I forget this school? I remember the day when I was student of class six. My mother had passed away while father had already expired. When I received the sad news of my mother's death, the Headmaster Saheb (Late) embraced me and said, 'your mother is no more, but this School is your mother.' After that he



never let me feel that I was an orphan.” Tears rolled down Zakir Saheb’s eyes, while saying this. His speech was so impressive that there were tears in the eyes of many people and students present there. Zakir Saheb also visited the room of the hostel he used to live in, during his student life. He embraced Banda Hasan, an old employee of the hostel and talked a bit to him. The people of Etawah were very much impressed by his modesty and compassion.

Zakir Saheb delivered the inaugural address at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the international Eucharistic Congress on November 28, 1964. On this occasion, he hoped that the Eucharistic Congress (a spiritual party of the Christians) would develop such a social order in the world which will be devoid of discrimination on the basis of caste, selfishness and inhuman immoral values and where truth, justice and mutual respect will find place. He said, “we are proud that India is a secular country. The country does not associate itself with a particular religion. Its Constitution has given equal rights to all religions and communities.

This characteristic of the Constitution expresses the respect engrained in the hearts of the Indians, which they have for spiritual values. He called Christianity an important aspect of Indian life and referred to the deep impact the Bible and Christianity had made on Mahatma Gandhi.

## **VISIT TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

Zakir Saheb went on tour to African Countries, in June 1964. He arrived in Algeria via Cairo on June 26. The Vice-President of Algeria, Muhammadi Sayeed welcomed him. He held talks with Sadar (President) Bin-Bela also. He also met the President of the National Assembly there and visited the orphanage where children of those who sacrificed their lives in freedom war were living. On July 1, Zakir Saheb arrived in Morocco where he was accorded a grand reception. Shah Hussain Sani hosted dinner in his honour and a grand celebration

took place at the Royal Palace. He was accorded the second highest honour of Marakash. A grand reception was accorded to him on July 2, in Marakash and on July 6, in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia on his arrival there. On arrival in Cairo on July 11, he called on President (Sadar) Colonel Nassir at his residence. He assured President Nassir during talks that India would continue to pursue the policies of Nehru.

In the convocation of Delhi University, dwelling on the student agitation and its causes, he said that students are not being taken care of properly. He said, "we should consider education a moral duty. Universities should be changed from institution to community center. The university should be like a place full of lively and dynamic opportunities. It should not be like a machine wherein there is movement but there is no life."

Zakir Saheb delivered Presidential address on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Darul Murannifin at Azamgarh, which is regarded as a priceless jewel of language and literature. In his speech, he reminded the Indian historians of their actual duty. There is reference to Zakir Saheb offering namaz in mosque on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Shibly Academy. Namaz had already started. In great haste, a vehicle stopped at the gate of the mosque. He entered the mosque hurriedly. The mosque was full of people offering namaz. Zakir Saheb first managed a place for himself by moving shoes in a corner and started offering namaz. All the people offering Namaz were watching how modest was the person who held such a high office of the country.

Zakir Saheb left on tour to Arab countries on May 19, 1965. He arrived in Kuwait on May 20. At the Riyadh airport Khalid-bin-Abdul Aziz welcomed him. There he met Shah Faizal and held talks on different problems. On May 21, he arrived in Ankava (Turkey). On his arrival in Greece he had talks with the Emperor/King and Prime Minister. In 1966, Zakir Saheb visited the Asian Countries. He was in Afghanistan from July 10 to 16



and in Thailand from October 8 to 10, in Cambodia from 11 to 13, and on tour to Malaysia and Singapore for five days from October 17. Grand reception was accorded to Zakir Saheb in Afghanistan. He laid the foundation of a Children's hospital on July 11, which was being set up with India's cooperation. He addressed the students in Bangkok, Capital of Thailand. Addressing the Indians there, he said, "you should spread India's message of peace and non-violence everywhere by your behaviour. Along with this you should participate also in the progress of the country, you live in.

## IN THE UNITED STATES

Zakir Saheb went to the Michigan University in America on April 19, 1967. The university was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> year. Zakir Saheb had been invited for special convocation address. It was a big honour and perhaps the first great honour being accorded to any Indian by any university of America. On the occasion, eminent scholars were invited at the convocation—from England, Europe, Asia and South America. Twenty one scholars all over the world including Zakir Saheb were given Honorary degrees. Zakir Saheb was honored with Doctor of Law. That was a symbol of respect for the ability and service of Zakir Saheb.

## INDO-PAK WAR

Indo-Pak war broke out in September 1965. As the Vice-President of the Republic of India, Zakir Saheb, broadcast message to the Nation from the All India Radio/Akashvani on September 18. His message symbolized nationalist views. He expressed his feeling on culture and religions in a special style. He said, "It was a black/dark day in our lives when there was demand for the freedom, and yet it came before us with an inauspicious condition of partition. Its supporters did not take pains to think about its hidden implications. Indian Muslims were told repeatedly that since

they are Muslims they cannot live in this country, the country where they and their ancestors were born, the country whose treasure they had enriched invaluablely for over a hundred years. They were being told that they should weed out their links with the country they were born in, they should leave behind their homes and hearth, their neighbours, their culture, their emotions of goodness, of friendliness and well-being and all else. Now the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, for whom India is always (their) country, are being told at gunpoint that Kashmir cannot continue to be part of India because Muslims are in majority there and should be handed over to Pakistan.” Zakir Saheb also exhorted the Muslims and all countrymen to strengthen their faith in themselves and their ideals. Muslims should realize that they are, wherever they are, by the order and will of the God. His Indian citizenship is for him a moral and spiritual pledge and he should live as a true follower of Islam. Muslims should wipe out fear from their mind, as fear leads to selfishness and hatred which further add a number of political and social ills. He should help and serve the cause of trust and welfare, and keep in mind the day when after his earthly life he will have to be answerable for his efforts to promote peace, welfare, cooperation, and friendship among the human beings. On the other hand, the brethren of the Muslims should respect their pledge. They should discard all misgivings and distrust from their minds. The compatriots should realize that they represent the religious faith and tradition of the majority. They should consolidate all their feelings and experiences in the interest of common cause.

## IMPORTANT SPEECHES

Zakir Saheb delivered a number of speeches on different occasions during his tenure as the Vice-President. His speeches were very much liked, specially his first speech in the Rajya Sabha, which he delivered on June 15, 1962. He



spoke on the characteristics of a good school on the foundation day of the Modern School, New Delhi on November 25, 1962. His speech on Basic National Education at the Tamil Nadu Basic Education Conference, Madras on August 22, 1964; his speech on Nehru's political thought and its significance in Indian history at Nehru Round Table UNESCO, New Delhi, on September 29, 1966; speech at the Maulana Azad Medical College founders day, New Delhi on October 24, 1966; inaugural speech on nuclear weapons at Sapru House on November 6, 1966; speech at Hindi Prachar Samiti, Mysore in August 1964, are of special significance. He addressed various universities on the occasion of convocations. Speech at Ahmedabad on October 3, 1963; speech at Agricultural University, Bangalore on August 21, 1964; convocation address at Agriculture University, Pant Nagar in 1965; speech at Mysore University on December 15, 1966; speech at Roorkee University on December 27, 1966 are noteworthy. The speech delivered at the Institute of Engineers, New Delhi on annual function on 1967, also has its own importance.

The last day of the tenure of Zakir Saheb as Vice-President was April 11, 1967. The Farewell Speech was the main agenda in the proceedings on that day. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the members of the Rajya Sabha gratefully acknowledged the services of Zakir Saheb. Smt. Gandhi very much appreciated his patience, affection, modesty and political understanding. Shri Bhupesh Gupta said, "Zakir Saheb always took care of the opposition while keeping the glorious tradition of the House lively and fulfilled all our hopes which we had expected while welcoming him in the House." Shri Raj Narain expressed sorrow at the parting and said that the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha might have been pained because of him sometimes and requested Zakir Saheb to forgive and forget. The leader of the House Shri M.C. Chopra said that the Chairman had many powers. He could reject the proposal

moved by the Members and give his ruling but Zakir Saheb exercised his powers with modesty, restraint and more than the required patience. He believed that the right to differences and criticism do exist under the principles of democracy. By his conduct he gave true meaning to the saying of Shakespeare that it is good if someone has the strength of a monster but it is not good to make use of that strength. Shri Chagla said that the whole House expressed gratitude for his services.

Zakir Saheb expressed gratitude for the words of goodwill. He also said that he was feeling uncomfortable as it was possible that somebody's praise right on his face might result in his moral deterioration. Since he did not have much experience in this regard — perhaps that was why he did not undergo this deterioration. However, today he had been praised and he would try to seek some ways to safe guard himself from such a deterioration.



## PRESIDENT OF INDIA

In 1967, the fourth general elections in the country were very significant, as after the demise of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the situation regarding political stability was a bit fluctuating. The Congress party gained five per cent less votes as compared to the previous elections. This had an impact on the Lok Sabha as well as the State Assembly seats and the situation so emerged that the Congress could form the Government at the Centre with a majority of only twenty members. No other party was in a position to hold the views of the whole country. After the announcement of poll results of the fourth General Elections, it had been difficult for the Congress to form Government in a number of States. The strength of the Congress was very much reduced. It was during that period the question of the election of the President came up. Mutual talks for this post began in the last week of February. By that time, the leaders of the opposition had not presented their viewpoint. Well-learned and serious leaders were of the opinion that the Congress and the opposition parties should jointly come forward with such a name that may be acceptable to all.

### ELECTIONS

Kamraj wanted Dr. Radhakrishnan to be nominated by the Congress for the second time and be elected as President. Smt. Gandhi and Dr. Radhakrishnan were not on the best of terms to enable him to be elected President for the second term.

Dr. Radhakrishnan treated Indiraji as a less experienced daughter of his friend and felt that she needed his patronage. But Indiraji did not like this. On the other hand, her rift with Kamraj was widening day by day. He had great respect for

Dr. Radhakrishnan and wanted him to continue as the President for second term also. Smt. Gandhi could make out what Kamraj wanted. She also realised that it was not easy to oppose this move. Kamraj was of the opinion that the President and the Vice-President be nominated for the second term, but Zakir Saheb was in no way prepared to be Vice-President again. He had already started sending his personal belongings to his house in Jamia Nagar from his official residence at 6, Maulana Azad Road. Kamraj was perplexed at seeing the delicate condition of the Congress after the Elections and felt that nomination of Zakir Saheb for the post of President was not devoid of risk. The situation deteriorated in such a way that the very possibility of the election of the President by consensus ended.

Dr. Radhakrishnan came to know about the unwillingness of Dr. Zakir Hussain to become Vice-President again.

Smt. Gandhi was firm on her decision. She made it her prestige issue. She knew that if Zakir Saheb was not nominated, he would resign. Now the relations between her and Kamraj were getting worse over the issue as to who had the right to nominate the candidate, the Congress President or the Prime Minister. This was why when she called a meeting of the Opposition parties, the Opposition, taking advantage of the difference, demanded that the Congress President should also be present in the meeting. She postponed the meeting itself. Next day the Opposition nominated Mr. Subba Rao. Dr. Radhakrishnan was very much pained by this situation. A day later, on April 10, Zakir Saheb's name was proposed and accepted. Smt. Indira Gandhi wanted that she would accept the Opposition's nominee for the post of Vice-President only on the condition that they accepted the nomination of Zakir Saheb. The Opposition did not agree to this and the name of Mr. V.V. Giri was approved for the post of Vice-President by the Congress. In between Smt. Gandhi made continuous efforts that the Opposition should agree on the name of the



Zakir Saheb, but the Opposition was in no way prepared to accept the name. Nomination papers were filed on April 11. Indira Gandhi proposed the name of Zakir Saheb and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed seconded it. The Opposition filed the nomination paper of Mr. Subba Rao and Prof. Muhammed Habib for the posts of President and Vice-President.

## OPPOSITION

The Opposition's hope for success relied only on cross voting by Congress Members. In their opinion, success for the Vice-Presidential candidate was certain (for the Congress). Both sides indulged in adopting all tactics to woo voters from the other side. In order to humiliate Congress and defeat the Government at the Centre, every mean tactic pertaining to religion, community and casteism was resorted to. So serious magazine and newspapers were also writing in a particular way. Two parties – Jan Sangh and Communist were specially against Zakir Saheb. Opposition included all types of people, parties and leaders, whose primary objective was to oppose Congress. Communal elements even opposed Zakir Saheb by attacking his personality, for example:

1. When Pandit Nehru intended to bring Uniform Civil Code, Zakir Saheb prevented him for doing so.
2. When his maternal grand daughter wanted to marry D.P. Mishra, D.I.G., Bihar, he wanted Mishra to embrace Islam and remain a Muslim at least for a year. He was successful in doing so. He himself taught Mishra, Namaz etc.
3. In 1947, he gave false evidence in Dr. Joshi's murder case.
4. One Urdu newspaper called him fundamentalist in its editorials, and wrote – "Zakir Saheb had invited Mr. Jinnah on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations of Jamia in 1946. Zakir Saheb was present when film actress Sharmila Tagore embraced Islam to marry Nawab of Pataudi."

When Zakir Saheb came to know all this, he became very sad. The contest was very tough. The Opposition parties had spared no means in opposing him. They reduced the importance of election to this high post to naught and brought it to the level of general election. All sorts of charges were made to tarnish his clean image crossing all limits of meanness and hurting feelings. But Zakir Saheb tolerated all this with great modesty. He did not refute any allegation.

Jay Prakash Narayan supported Zakir Saheb in a statement on April 22 and advised the Opposition to abandon its narrow point of view. He said that if Zakir Saheb was not elected President, there would be disorder in the country and the country would break into pieces. An elderly person reacted that Jay Prakash wanted to create one more Pakistan and is inciting the Muslims. Newspapers wrote openly on this. *The Hindustan Times*, after coming across the statements regarding personal aspersions and meanness, raised the question that if a good and true Muslim cannot be nationalist, how can a good and true Hindu be so? In this connection, an interesting controversy arose in newspapers that Zakir Saheb's election will testify the secularism of the country. The Opposition leaders even started saying that Zakir Saheb's defeat will be the defeat of the Indira government. Then the Congress will have no right to be in office at the Centre. This was the biggest crisis and the Congress Members did not want to buy this idea. They were helpless to cast their votes for the Congress nominee. The English magazine "Mainstream" wrote in this connection that an important election facing the colleagues of Indira Gandhi was that if Zakir Saheb was not successful, Indira government would have to resign consequently, and the mid-term elections would be held for the Lok Sabha. Many Congress Members did not want to face the elections again. They did not hurt themselves by taking the risk of defeating the Congress candidate.



## ZAKIR SAHEB'S VICTORY

Finally, the election result was announced and Zakir Hussain got the majority of votes. All India Radio intercepted its programme to announce the result. Foreign Radio channels and newspapers broadcast and published this news. Many people outside the parliament were keen to know the result. They raised slogans 'Zakir Hussain Zindabad' while clapping. The scene at the Connaught Place was worth watching. People were rejoicing. The result was announced on Loud Speaker in the Jama Masjid area and people of different communities embraced each other. Dr. Radhakrishnan was the first one to congratulate Zakir Saheb on telephone. Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Ram Subhag Singh were the first ones to arrive at his house. Later, people from all directions started assembling. Representatives of newspapers, photographers, Press Correspondents etc. started collecting at his bungalow even before the result was announced. The joys of people know no bounds. Groups after groups started assembling at the bungalow. The atmosphere was resounding with congratulatory remarks. The Ministers, Members of Parliament, Photographers and Press persons surrounded Zakir Saheb. Newspapers also wrote, welcoming the result. *The Indian Express* wrote that this was the victory of justice and far sightedness. He was the right candidate and claimant for the post of President after remaining in the office of Vice President for five years and discharging the duties of the post in his characteristic manner. Ignoring him would have meant bringing in only injustice but would have also been evident that he had been deliberately left out for being a member of the minority community. It was a matter of happiness that justice and far-sightedness worked and the victory had been quite grand and satisfactory.

*The Times of India*, New Delhi wrote that he had talent and character and was well-equipped to discharge his duties. If the elected representatives had elected Zakir Saheb by majority

and others voted for Mr. Subha Rao, that did not mean the electors did so for the sake of any particular principle or for secularism or for some other matter but because the candidate they voted for, was suitable in every respect.

A magazine 'Thought' published from the Capital, in its editorial, *Yet Another Great Man in Rashtrapati Bhavan* gave details of Zakir Saheb's service in the field of education, his love for humans, and of his personality, his character as the Vice-President. *The Hindustan Times* wrote an editorial. So many other newspapers wrote so many things about Zakir Saheb. His victory was celebrated not only in the country, even in foreign countries, people were very happy with his election. In America, Zakir Saheb's victory was regarded as victory of those high ideals of secularism, which free India adopted under the guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru. The German newspapers also, while appreciating the victory of Zakir Saheb, called it the victory of secularism along with the victory of the Congress. A newspaper of Lebanon 'Al Nahar' expressed surprise over this victory. It referred to the condition of the Indian Muslims and their difficulty and wrote that it was difficult at the moment to say that the Muslim President would be able enough to change any policy of India or the opinion about India in the world. A paper from Beirut 'Al Hada'f' wrote that India would overcome its communal problems by electing a Muslim as its President. 'Cairo River' wrote in this connection that the election of Zakir Saheb was the victory of democratic socialism and real secular principles for the entire United Arab. It said while bestowing its good wishes, that the relations between India and the United Arab were today ushering in a new era of increasing friendship and harmony. And when Zakir Saheb gave the message to the nation after becoming President, he said that we should dedicate ourselves to the creating of a better, complete and civilized society. We should speak less, quarrel less, work hard and live in harmony.



When the representatives of *The Indian Express* wanted to know about him, he said that he did not look for a new job in life as that did not attract him. He had no doubt decided to associate himself with education. He did not take any decision regarding his life himself. He went to Aligarh as Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad wanted him to do so. There he had completed two terms. When he resigned after eight years, he thought he was retiring. He had his house in Okhla, so there was no problem of accommodation. When the representative asked him what he thought was a good and successful life about he replied that the most satisfying thing in life was that one should be able to serve his fellow-beings and he should be convinced that he was not indulging in any mean act. This was his attitude towards good life, he said.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Innumerable congratulatory messages were received from the country and abroad on the election of Zakir Saheb. Smt. Indira Gandhi said in her message, "Life-long service with dedication has bestowed on him the love, respect and good wishes of the nation. I am very happy today." Kamraj in his message said that the people have through the Congress, expressed their full faith in secularism. Maulana Azad Madni said that it shows that the representatives of the country have the capacity to take decision on any issues on the basis of ability. Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee said that he was worthy of respect and congratulations. Opposition to him should end now.

## SWEARING IN

Swearing in ceremony of the President and the Vice-President was held in the Central Hall of the Parliament on May 13, 1967. Thirty one gun salutes were given. After the salute, the Chief Justice K.N. Wanchoo administered the oath to Zakir Saheb. The ceremony was attended by the officers of all three wings of the services, foreign diplomats and many other

people. Dr. Radhakrishnan vacated the Presidential chair for Zakir Saheb after he was sworn in. After taking oath, Zakir Saheb in his first speech as President said, “The whole India is my home and all those living here are my family.” In fact, this sentence of Zakir Saheb’s speech was the biggest truth in his life. After taking oath, Zakir Saheb rode the six-horses driven carriage of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The day of May 13, 1967, added a new chapter in the history of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The whole of Rashtrapati Bhavan was keen to receive Zakir Saheb and was proud of the fact that a Sufi Fakir was going to add to the glory and dignity of the Bhavan as the President.

## **RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN**

Rashtrapati Bhavan was earlier the residence of British Viceroy. In 1950, when the country had new Constitution and the First President was elected, it was named Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Governor General Rajgopalachari was the first to occupy the place, then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Radhakrishnan in that order. After Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Hussain came to Rashtrapati Bhavan as the President of free India.

When the British government made Delhi their capital, construction of a number of grand mansions started in Delhi. All this began in 1911 after the Delhi Durbar. The work was held up a bit by the breaking out of the world war in 1914. The construction of Rashtrapati Bhavan started in 1921 under the supervision of Edwin Luytens the greatest engineer of the time. This encompasses an area of sixteen and a half hundred bighas of land, which has garden, residential quarters for the employees, motor garages, one Higher Secondary School for the children of employees and a dispensary. The main building is on 25 bighas land. It has 340 rooms, 25 verandahs, 227 pillars and 37 fountains. Its construction was completed in eight years and the



cost of construction was to the tune of one crore forty lakh rupees. The building has been constructed on solid rocks. Stones for the building were acquired from Dhaulpur. The ceiling of most of the rooms are made of black and white marble from Europe and Italy. If one walks a bit on the road between the secretariat buildings, one will come across iron railing in the midst of which is a gate in the boundary wall. Inside is an 145 foot high pillar in the courtyard, which has on its top, six-cornered star made of cut glass. This pillar is called Jaipur pillar as the Maharaja of Jaipur had gifted it. One can see a beautiful dome just behind it on which is hoisted the President's flag. The flag has on it the symbol of elephants, lotus flower, balances, the lions of Ashokan pillar. At night, a shining red bulb burns there.

When the President is out of Delhi, neither the flag is unfurled nor the red bulb burns. President's flag has since been replaced by the National Flag atop Rashtrapati Bhavan. On the front is a big iron gate from which the President's cavalcade passes through. On both sides of this gate are two comparatively smaller gates, and the roads through them lead to particular buildings. These also act as the passages for persons other than the President. The large gate remains closed and opens only when the President passes through. Inside the gate is a large courtyard with pebbles spread on it.

On arrival near the building are stairs made of white stones, which lead to the largest circular hall (Durbar Hall) of the building. This hall is just below the dome. Inside the hall, in the center is, hanging a chandelier. The viceroy used to hold durbar there. Now different official functions are held here. Then there is Ashoka Hall. This was Viceroy's Ball Room. Glass pieces are fixed on its wall. It has been very beautifully decorated. The ceiling is very artistic with Persian painting on it. This was done by the famous Italian artist Colonello. Government functions are organized here. After it is the Banquet Hall with a long table in the middle, providing for 104 people to sit and dine. The

photographs of the Presidents of free India and British Governor Generals adorn its walls. The Study Room of the President is located in the middle of the Durbar Hall and the Ashoka Hall. The President meets his guests in the room adjacent to the Study Room. He meets groups or delegations in the adjacent Panel Room. For formal lunches and dinners is the adjacent Drawing Room which has chairs of Victorian style. The viceroy used to live in the northern part which is known as North Court. Visiting foreign dignitaries stay here. President Nassir and General Tito had stayed there. These rooms are known as Dwarka suite, Tagore suite and Nalanda suite. Zakir Saheb lived on the first floor in the western part of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. It had three rooms, one was for Zakir Saheb, another for his wife and the third one for his grand daughters. His office was on the ground floor.

## **THE MUGHAL GARDEN**

Behind this building is the Mughal Garden. This was the gift of Lady Hardinge who was aboard to see the Mughal Garden of Kashmir. This Garden is the reflection of that amazement. Paths have been constructed there with the slabs of red stones. There are two canals, 18 foot wide, on the northern and southern sides of the Garden. In between is an island with an area of 200 square feet. The Garden is opened to the public every year in February – March.

## **APPEAL TO THE NATION**

After Zakir Saheb was elected President, somebody asked him as to how he was feeling. He said that he was feeling the sense of humility not the humility which throttled the energy to work but that humility what he considered a virtue, which was necessary for the development of personality, progress of education and willingness for public service—the humility which gave the courage and determination to put in one's best capacities in any work.



In his address on All India Radio, Zakir Saheb appealed to the nation to engage itself in creating a better, complete and beautiful life with dedication. Later in his statement, he said “I am grateful to the whole nation – the representatives of the people as well as the people in general – for reposing their confidence in me to hold the high office of President of the Indian Republic. It is a great honour indeed, that the nation has bestowed on a mere teacher who, some forty seven years ago, regaled to devote the best years of his life to national education. It appears to be an unequivocal recognition by my people of the fact that education is inextricably linked with the quality of a nation’s life, that it is, indeed, a prime instrument of national purpose. I can assure my people that I shall strive to be worthy of the trust placed in me. I began my public career at the feet of Mahatmaji and he has been my guide and mentor.... It shall be my aim to bring our people together so that they all put their efforts to shoulder the tremendous tasks that lie ahead of us. I am painfully conscious of the distress that prevails in parts of the country. Food shortage seems to have become endemic. We have to stand up to the best of our ability to fight all these enemies of our people’s prosperity. Let us rededicate ourselves to the tremendous task of alleviating the suffering of our people. I shall rededicate myself to these tasks and shall go to Rajghat tomorrow morning at seven to do so at the Samadhi of the great man who first showed me the way to devote myself to the service of my countrymen. I hope you will all rededicate yourselves to the task of making the country strong and its people happy. May God give each one of us the strength and courage to perform his duty.”

## **MEETING WITH SHANKARACHARYA AND SUSHIL MUNI**

Zakir Saheb met the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri and Jain Muni Sushil Kumar on May 12. He presented them some fruit and flowers in a plate and accepted their blessings.

This invoked different reactions. The manner in which the daily newspaper — *The Statesman* published this report necessitated expression of the newspapers and people. A photograph was also published along with the report, in which the Shankaracharya was seen sitting either on the floor or on a low wooden platform and Zakir Saheb slightly bending, was offering a garland of flowers in his service. The report was like this – “on the eve of his taking over as President of India, Dr. Zakir Hussain called on Jagadguru on Friday and received his blessings, reports PTI. Placing flowers and fruits at the feet of the Jagadguru, Dr. Hussain sought his blessings. The Shankaracharya raised his hand over the head of the President elect and blessed him. After the benediction, Dr. Hussain and the Swamiji talked for about ten minutes. Dr. Hussain then touched the Swamiji’s feet in reverence and took leave of him. Dr. Hussain also called on Jain Muni Sushil Kumar to seek his blessings. Dr. Hussain sat on an ordinary durrie (carpet) while the Muni sat on a wooden platform. They were together for 20 minutes in a room which had no fans.”

So far as touching the feet was concerned, this report was not correct. According to a friend of Zakir Saheb, he had offered only flowers and fruits. This report as such does not seem to be correct as it is not certain that the PTI representative was present there and even if he was present his photographer also would have been there and taken a photograph. And surely he should have done this task.

This practice of Zakir Saheb was generally not considered good among the Muslims and they were very indignant. The Indian newspapers made all sorts of comments also on this. Some said they had now no hope from Zakir Saheb. Maulana Abdul Majid Dariabadi said in this connection that there were dargahs of many great ‘Aulias’ as well as dargahs of Allah in Delhi, it was not known whether the President paid his respect there or not. If he would have, this must have been reported by



newspapers. On June 30, 1967, he said in Sikka-e-Jadit that it was also possible that the President set an example for his successor. The President from the majority community shall sincerely in future pay his respects to the religious persons of the minority community and seek their blessings. But soon when most of the Muslims noticed that Zakir Saheb had come to Jama Masjid to offer namaz on Eid, they forgot all this and embraced him with affection.

In the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Zakir Saheb did not take anything. He had gone there with his wife, daughter's daughter, some private servants, two cows, a parrot in addition to five thousand books and other households goods. Zakir Saheb had already deep interest in gardens. He did a lot in this regard in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. His personal interest helped a lot in beautifying the Mughal Garden. The garden there became more elegant. New rose-beds, flowering creepers and plants with beautiful multi-coloured leaves were added methodically in large numbers to give the impression of a sheet of beauty and light spread over there. The beauty of engraved calligraphy made the identical old pictures in the northern park of the building where foreign delegates stay, more attractive.

## ENGAGEMENTS

Zakir Saheb got very busy after becoming President. In addition to the burden of official and other works, he had instructed his officials not to reject the requests of those who wished to call on him. He used to spend several hours everyday in meeting people. Similarly, Zakir Saheb, was not able to turn down the requests for attending marriages or functions. In doing so he did not want to dishearten anyone. The family members would ask Zakir Saheb why he agreed to attend such functions specially when he had to take food which violated his dietary food habits and affected his health also. Zakir Saheb replied to them that they would not imagine

that he is more perturbed by rejecting their request rather than by taking such food.

## **SPEECHES**

After becoming President, Zakir Saheb delivered a number of speeches on different occasions, noteworthy among them are broadcast to the Nation on August 14, 1967 the eve of Independence Day; at Air Force Academy, Hyderabad on the occasion of the inauguration of the Annual Conference of Governors; on the occasion of the laying of foundation of Guru Govind Singh Bhavan; on the Republic Day at the Punjab University, Patiala; at the reception of the UNCTAD delegation; address at the Joint Session of the Parliament; on the occasion of the laying of foundation of Ghalib Memorial Hall; on the arrival of the Emperor/Shah of Ethiopia Haile Solassi; at different places during visit to Russia; on the laying of foundation of Khalsa College of Delhi University; Radio broadcast on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti; welcome address for the President of Somalia Abdur Rashid Sher Marke, Presidential address at the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan in Bombay/Mumbai; on the arrival of the Shah of Iran Mohammad Raza Pehalvi and later at the dinner at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Zakir Saheb delivered a number of speeches during his tenure as the President. These speeches reflect his great personality.

At the foundation laying ceremony of Guru Govind Singh Bhavan, he said, "I consider it a matter of privilege to be with you on this great and auspicious occasion. I am indeed beholden to the Vice-Chancellor for having asked me to lay the foundation stone of the Guru Govind Singh Bhavan. But, believe me, I am too embarrassed to think that my name is being obliquely referred to that noble and pious man of God, whose name is associated with the laying of the foundation of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. There is, if I may say so, little comparison between a lofty soul of that spiritual stature and an ordinary creature like myself ..... kindly accept my heartiest congratulations



on this day when this University takes the lead in establishing the chair of comparative Religion in India. Such a scholastic pursuit could scarcely find a more congenial atmosphere than the one obtained in this country..... I am sure, now that the first step has been taken, we shall forge ahead as expeditiously as possible. A quest of this nature suits the Indian genius which seeking unity amidst diversity, strives to end all kinds of doctrinal dispute. In fact, the social structuring of the edifice that is India, make such a venture possible. One striking view of this will assuredly be seen in the work to be undertaken at this Bhavan. I think, a person only realizes the true significance of his link with the motherland when he understands the connotation of the word 'home'. As it is, the concept has diverse ramifications. Thus, for a child, it signifies the mother's warm and bounteous lap. As he grows up, the parents' hut or palace, as the case may be, becomes the symbol of home. Gradually, as his consciousness expands, the extended street or hamlet or town begins to acquire that meaning in his mind. Then things in the neighbourhood – trees, plants, chirping of sparrows, familiar faces, domestic animals etc. – become the furniture and setting of his wonderful home. And thus as he graduates to higher reaches of awareness and knowledge, man begins to see it as a precinct that comprehends a variety of walks and thresholds, that embodies diverse ideas and dreams. This mansion reflects a composite culture. Religious features and parables, art and literature, history and chronicle – all these and a great deal more then become its paraphernalia and embellishment. In short, very soon, the courtyard of the multi-dimensional edifice begins to grow and envelope the entire country, and the natives of the land begin to appear as inmates of one's house.... What started as a mothers' lap had finally expanded to include not only the topography around, but also the vast panorama of national life. How wide indeed is the circumference of one's home! Himachal and Vindhya, the Ganga and the Jamuna, the Krishna and the Kaveri, Badrinath and Rameshwaram, Dwarka

and Jagannath Puri, Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Mahavira, Shankaracharya and Ramanuja, Ashoka and Akbar, Nanak and Kabir and Guru Govind Singh, Chisti and Khwaja Nizamuddin, Surdas and Tukaram and Mira Bai, Kalidas and Tulsidas, Ghalib and Anis, Vallathol and Tagore, Gandhi and Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru – these and scores of other people and their works constitute this great house (called India). These hallowed names evoke the same degree of warmth, peace and bliss which the mother's lap give to the child in all fullness. And thus one begins to love and serve this great and vast and expanding house with equal intensity. I have every hope that Guru Govind Singh Bhavan will help reinforce that concept and vision of home.”

## FOREIGN VISITS

After becoming the President, Zakir Saheb visited foreign countries. He arrived in Budapest, Capital of Hungary on June 6, 1968 as the President of India. A grand reception was accorded to him there. The Budapest University conferred on him Honorary Degree. Referring to the friendly relations between Hungary and India, Zakir Saheb mentioned those classical achievements of the University which related to the culture and literature of India. He threw light on those common educational and humanist problems in this era of science and technology, which need special attention in the race for economic prosperity.

On June 10, Zakir Saheb was accorded grand reception by the Assembly of Belgrade, the Capital of Yugoslavia. He met President Tito and held talks on the importance of the organization of the Non-aligned countries. Zakir Saheb arrived in Moscow via Tashkant on a ten-day visit. There he met President Kosygin. He visited Leningrad, Tiblisi, Georgia, Samrkand and Tashkant. Seeing the glimpses of Indian civilization and culture in Tashkant, he felt that the relations between the Soviet Union and India could be further strengthened. After his visit to the Soviet Union, Zakir Saheb stopped at Kabul for three hours, where he



held talks with the Shah and the Empress of Afghanistan. He also met Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan.

Zakir Saheb had been in Nepal from October 12 to October 17, 1968. The King of Nepal hosted a grand reception in his honour. In an important function, Zakir Saheb assured the friendship and cooperation for the development of Nepal. He laid the foundation of the Gandhi Memorial University which was being set up with the cooperation of India. He laid the foundation of the Indian Embassey also.

In foreign countries, Zakir Saheb very much impressed the people by his unique and characteristic behaviour, speeches and writings. Zakir Saheb was one such President, during whose tenure foreign envoys would seek opportunity to talk to him even for a short while in some function or the other. There was some attraction in his personality, which left everybody impressed.

## PASSING AWAY

**Z**akir Saheb occupied the office of the President for about two years and discharged his duties with perfection. In April 1968, when the programme of his visit to Assam was finalized he was not well. The doctors and family members advised him to postpone this programme for sometime. Zakir Saheb told them, he had certain responsibilities as President and he had to fulfil the same. The visit was already announced. The Governor of Assam had long back requested for this visit. If he did not go now, a large number of people there would be disappointed. Preparations made so far, would go waste. The question of health was important but could not be given priority over duty, Zakir Saheb told the doctors. "Now I leave the decision to you. If in your opinion, my health does not permit then, I should leave Rashtrapati Bhavan tomorrow for the house at Okhla. I cannot ignore my duties while living here. Now the ball is in your court." Listening to this, the doctors found themselves helpless and the visit was completed as per the programme. When he returned he was exhausted. The doctors strictly advised complete rest and not to see any visitors for ten days. Zakir Saheb accepted the restrictions on the condition that there would be no restriction after ten days. During this period, his daughter Sayeeda and her husband Khursheed Alam Khan came to enquire about his welfare, and found Zakir Saheb reading something as was his habit. Seeing daughter Sayeeda, Zakir Saheb asked if there was big loss in theft in her house, consoled her and further said, "you must have read about charity, if one does not give prescribed charity, Allah gets it done in other ways". This was Sayeeda's meeting with Zakir Saheb last. On May 3, 1969, at 11.20 A.M. Zakir Saheb passed away. He was well in the morning and



performed all his routine work. At quarter to eleven, doctors came for a checkup. Zakir Saheb told them to wait for a while and went to bathroom. When there was unusual delay, his attendant Is-haq got worried. He knocked the door but there was no response. Is-haq ran towards the other door which he kept locked and kept the key with him. When the door was unlocked he was found lying near the door. Perhaps he fell down while trying to open the door. The doctors lifted him. His soul had left his body. Despite all efforts by the doctors, his soul had already departed for the heavenly abode. Zakir Saheb had departed from the world and reached his Malik-e-Hakiki where people wish to go and express their desire for this towards the end of their lives. He often recited a couplet:-

*“Meri Zindagi to guzri tere hizr ke sahaare  
Meri Maut ko bhi pyare koyi chahiye bahaanaa.”*

Which means:-

My life passed in pangs of separation from you. My life passed in longing for you. Dear! There needs to be some excuse for my death also.

Zakir Saheb passed away so suddenly that it was unbelievable. Officially the news of his death was broadcast by Radio. The flag of the Rashtrapati Bhavan and other government buildings were flown half mast. 13 days official mourning was announced. As news started spreading, family relations, relatives and friends started arriving at Rashtrapati Bhavan. At about 4 p.m. Zakir Saheb's body was wrapped in Khadi. He had worn khadi all his life. After the last glimpse by the women in the house, the body was taken to the courtyard, where Maulana Syed Fakruddin Saheb conducted the Namaz.

## NATIONAL HONOUR

Zakir Saheb expired on May 3, 1969. The whole country was plunged in grief. It was a big fall for Jamia. After the last glimpse by the house, the body was taken to Durbar Hall

downstairs. The body was laden with flowers. People came and paid floral tributes. Visitors had formed a long queue. People had turned up in large numbers to pay their last respect to their beloved President. When the body was taken to the Durbar Hall, the members of the family and other women sat in the next room. Men and women kept on reciting Quran Sharif day and night. People of other religions also kept on reciting their scriptures. On May 4, at 4 p.m., the body was brought out from the Durbar Hall to the courtyard where the Namaz was conducted by the Sheikhlhadees of Deoband, and Maulana Syed Fakhruddin Saheb. Then the body was lifted by pall bearers and placed on the gun carriage laden with flowers. The bodyguards of the President led the funeral procession. Behind them were units of Airforce, Navy and Army and the gun carriage followed by the relatives, friends, Ministers and V.I.Ps and the diplomats. The beloved leader was bid farewell with national honour.

### **FUNERAL IN JAMIA**

The funeral procession plunged in grief and sorrow proceeded towards Jamia Nagar, Okhla via Rajpath. There was crowd on both sides of the road. At about 7 p.m. it reached the lawns of Jamia College where Maulana Mufti Atikkur Rehman Osmani conducted the Namaz.

This was that very lawn of Jamia College where Zakir Saheb used to offer the Namaz of Eid. After the Namaz the body was taken from the lawns of the Jamia college to the place where the grave was ready and people were standing all around. The body was placed in the grave and consigned to earth. Friends and relatives participated in offering handfuls of earth into the grave.

In Jamia, on the eastern side of the Mazar is Jamia school, Mosque on the northern side and the Central Library of Jamia on the Southern side. Even after his death, this great teacher remains associated with education.



## WRITINGS

**Z**akir Saheb was a great man. He performed a number of great things. He was a good teacher, statesman and a social worker. He made valuable contribution as writer also. He wrote a number of books and articles. A number of his speeches have been published.

## TRANSLATIONS

Zakir Saheb has made significant contribution as translator. He translated Plato's *Republic*, in the name of 'Riyasat'. Zakir Saheb had started this work of translation during his student life itself. About this translation, Zakir Hussain's friends had said – "if Plato knew Hindi, he would have written it in this very language". 'Riyasat' was first published by Anjuman Taraqqiye in Urdu. Later Sahitya Academy printed it in 1967. In 1971, the Hindi translation was taken up by S.I.S. Prakashan, Fawvara Delhi. This translation was taken up in the life time of Zakir Saheb, and was published after his death. Zakir Saheb's translation of Edwim Kenin's book 'Elementary Political Economy, in the name of 'Mabadi Maashiyat' was published.

## BOOKS

In Germany, Zakir Saheb wrote a book on Mahatma Gandhi which was published in 1924. 'Maashiyaat Maksad Aur Minhaz', lectures of March 1932, was published by Hindustan Academy, Allahabad. 'Capitalism—Essays in understanding Lectures' were delivered in 1944 in Delhi University, and published in 1967 by Asia Publishing, Bombay. The Report of Primary National Education on the Wadhwa Committee was published by the All India Education Board in 1938. The Patel

Memorial Lectures on 'Educational Reconstruction in India' was published by the Publications Division in 1959. Its Urdu translation was done by Dr. Syed Abid Hussain. The Mavalankar Memorial Lectures on 'Ethics and the State' was published in 1960. 'Dynamic University' was published by the Asia Publishing, Bombay in 1965. 'Hale Muhabbewatan' (Nationalist—a Pamphlet) was printed by Urdu Kitab Ghar, Delhi in 1943. 'Zakir Hussain' (Pamphlet) was published in book form by Imamia Mission, Lucknow. 'Talimi Khutbat' was published by Maktaba, Jamia, New Delhi in 1943. Till 1946, six editions of this book were published. 'Jamia kya hai?' (Pamphlet) was published in 1946. 'Mashiyar-e-Quami', translation of Faudrillist's book *National Economy* was published in 1946. 'Abbu Khan ki Bakri Aur Chaudah Kahanian', was published in 1963 by Maktaba Jamia, New Delhi. Some of the stories like 'Shiksha', 'Kachhua Aur Khargosh', 'Abbu Khan ki Bakri' were translated in Hindi also. The Hindi translation of 'Kachhua Aur Khargosh' was published by Delhi Hindi Akademi in 1987.

## ARTICLES

In addition to these writings, a number of articles by Zakir Saheb are also talked about, which were published in different magazines from time to time. Most of these articles relate to Economics while the articles relating to education were published in the magazine 'Jamia' of Jamia Millia Islamia and other magazines also. Zakir Saheb was deeply interested in literature and culture. One finds reference to them in different articles of Zakir Hussain. Among these articles are 'Talim aur Azadi-e-Fikr,' Interview with Khalida Adib Khanam, Higher National Education in China and Jamia Millia Islamia, Economic Conference, Russia and Capitalist Countries; Germany, Australia, Japan, Europe and the Impending war; Germany, Italy, England—An important speech; America, Russia, Japan and Britain—change in government (*Vijarat mein Tabdili*); Congress governments *Vijaratin*; Hakim Saheb, Dr. Ansari; 'Hussain aur



Insaniyat'; Urdu—common language of India (Hind ki Mushtarak Zubaan Urdu); Saudi Arabia, Making of Personality (*Shakhsisyyat ki Taameer*); Aligarh after 1903; Maulana Abdul Kalam 'Azad'; Life Sketch Bahadur Shah Zafar— *Seerat ki Taameer*; *Dil ke Khoon se Likhee Hui Tahreerein* etc. Zakir Saheb had delivered a number of speeches from time to time. His speeches have been published in English language by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Zakir Saheb was a very sensitive person. He had the heart of a writer. Had he not been engaged in high post, readers would have come across a lot of his literary writings. Despite being busy, whatever he wrote is very valuable and throws light on his personality. His writings are an asset for the country.

# PERSONALITY

## LOVE FOR CHILDREN

**Z**akir Saheb had great love for children. He loved all children, his own or of others. He took as much care of other children as he took of his own. He never treated children as toys of amusement. He had great respect for them. Often he would say, "Give respect to children. Who knows, what will each child become when he grows up. Who knows how many scholars, sufi-saints and how many great persons are hidden in them. In order to please children, he would store a number of articles of their liking like pencil, paper, coloured chalk, toffee and would give these to children coming to him. He would go to them after returning from walk in the morning. Some would be sleeping, some getting up angrily. He would pat them, tickle their heads affectionately. Zakir Saheb got stitched a woollen suit for the 5-6 year old son of his gardener, called him and dressed him up very affectionately. Then after seeing the child, he was full of ecstasy. Children also loved him very much. This interest in children and his enthusiasm for education are visible in the shape of Jamia. Zakir Saheb wrote a numbers of stories for children which show his deep understanding of child psychology. Literature for them penned by him is interesting and useful. One noteworthy article 'Nanha Madrasa Chale' by Zakir Saheb (The kid goes to School) is very significant. In that article, he has told the teachers not to treat his class as a flock of sheep. They should attend to the ability and requirement of each and every child. The family condition generates difference among children. If teachers don't keep an eye on this, those needing support will get a jolt. This will prove to be disheartening to children while they need to be encouraged to achieve the desired result. When your



smile could make the child blossom, your indifference would let it fade away. If the child gets proper respect and honour, you will be able to understand his mental level and problems and find solution according to the needs of every child. You should also keep an eye on the fact that the mental requirements of the children can be different from each one. You will be the true guardians of the children, that is the true caretaker and trustee of the gift of Nature i.e. the children. Zakir Saheb told the parents of the children to support them and make their movement smooth. Don't change the direction of their movement. We also should not pay so much attention to him lest he stops paying any attention to himself. Respect and honour the child. The child is not your property, he is nature's gift under your care. Acknowledge nature's right over him, more than yours. Zakir Saheb would just be a child in the company of children. He would make the children preside over the functions meant for children and would thus take a measure to create self-confidence in them.

## COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS

Collection of articles of one's liking is the tendency of human being. Hobbies of collection of coins, jewellery, stamps are well known. Zakir Saheb was not fond of them. He was very fond of buying paintings of good artists. If he had money, he must purchase a painting. He had complete knowledge of the art of painting. He had also complete information regarding the history and background of a particular painting. He would also find out full information of the life of the painter. Rare paintings would adorn his drawing room. He knew a number of painters of his time, intimately. He had a number of rare and excellent paintings.

In addition to paintings, Zakir Saheb was very fond of collecting transcripts—old and new and also collecting samples of well-known calligraphy. He had a good collection of calligraphy and got them framed and kept it in the drawing room

and other rooms. Zakir Saheb had got a number of calligraphies fixed in the very first gallery after entering the Rashtrapati Bhavan, which could not escape the sight of the entrants. Among them were also the couplets of great poets.

## STONES

Zakir Saheb was very fond of collecting stones. Since his Aligarh days, he would look for stones wherever he went, inside or outside the country. People came to know about this hobby of Zakir Saheb. He would receive stones as presents also. Some stones were so heavy that it was difficult to carry them. Some stones and fossils would be very costly also. In Russia, he was presented the coloured stones of ural in a tree-like form. He was also presented a set of cut glass stones. Keeping in mind his hobby, the Shah (Emperor) of Greece sent to him the samples of Greek marbles in a beautiful case. When Zakir Saheb visited Algeria, he brought a rose-shaped stone from there. The Governor General of Australia sent a present of milky stone of light blue colour. The number of these stones increased so much that they were fixed in a large room of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, still a number of them remained unfixed. So many stones have been preserved in the museum near his tomb. Zakir Saheb would see these stones with great interest and talk about them in great detail. He had a stone with diamond embedded in it.

## GARDENING

Zakir Saheb was very fond of gardening. He had a good knowledge of plants, trees, flowers and seeds. Once he was proceeding in a procession at Tunis. He happened to see dwarf pomegranates on both sides of the road. He stopped there, and did not proceed further unless he collected the information about the technique of production of that variety of pomegranate.



## ROSES

Zakir Saheb had deep love for roses. He got roses planted at various places in the country. He wanted rose plants of good variety with beautiful, colourful flowers and blossoming for longer duration, to be brought and planted. It was in view of this hobby, that rose experts named a rose of new and good variety 'Zakir Hussain'. Zakir Saheb had got a strange variety of rose, requisitioned and planted from West Germany. The first flower of this plant was presented on his behalf to the Queen of Iran 'Farahdiba' during her visit to India. It was named 'Kaisare Farah' by him. The Rose Show of Aligarh began when Zakir Saheb was there. When he was the Governor of Bihar, Mr. Bhattacharya of Deogarh, being impressed by Zakir Saheb's love for roses, named a variety of roses 'Zakir Hussain'. The Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Raja Bhadri also named one variety of rose as 'Zakir Hussain'. Rashid named the beautiful garden of his bungalow 'Zakir Bagh'. In Chandigarh, 'Dr. Zakir Hussain Rose Garden' was planted, where strange varieties of roses can be seen. Zakir Saheb got innumerable varieties of roses planted in Patna and Ranchi Raj Bhavan. In the official residence of the President at 6, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi, different varieties of roses were planted with the cooperation of the Professor of the Department of Botany, Dr. Virendra Kumar, which still stand as evidence of his beautiful choice. In Rashtrapati Bhavan also, he got a number of varieties of rose planted.

## BOUGAINVILLEA

In Aligarh, the craze of planting Bougainvillea began when Zakir Saheb was there. Prof. Harbinder Singh developed Bougainvillea of different colours. One of them was named 'Zakiryana'.

Zakir Saheb was also very fond of Bouganvilla flower. Growing Bouganvilla needs neither hard work nor more

water. The plant gives a number of flowers. Zakir Saheb got so many Bougainvillea planted in Jamia.

## **MANGOES**

Zakir Saheb was very fond of mangoes. He had extensive knowledge about the varieties of mango, technique to pluck them and taking care of the orchard etc. Whenever he went abroad, the favourite subject of his talks would be fruits, flowers and plants. He would also collect information about flowers there. There are a number of plants and trees near his tomb which remind one of this hobby of Zakir Saheb.

## **PARTIES AND LOVE FOR FOOD**

Zakir Saheb very much loved to throw parties. He would be very happy after the guests had enjoyed the food. He was very fond of food cooked by his wife Shahjahan Begam Sahiba. She would cook for the guests also. She herself cooked food for the parties. Sometimes it happened that Zakir Saheb would invite people and forget to inform her. But she managed the situation very gracefully. Zakir Saheb was very fond of good food. Whenever he went to Delhi from Aligarh, he returned to the hostel with lots of eatables. There was a time when delicious food was available at the stairs of Jama Masjid in Delhi. Zakir Saheb was aware of all the items. Whenever he went to Delhi, he must taken Biryani and Kebab there. He was fond of varieties of food, especially Kebab, fish etc.

It was the characteristic of Zakir Saheb to enjoy even simple food. Because of illness, he had to live on diet food. He very much enjoyed talking over food for which he would even forego his rest. He would narrate jokes and anecdotes and exchange pleasantries.



## SHER-O-SHAYARI (POETRY)

A number of stories and articles written by Zakir Saheb are available. He also took to translation alongwith music, painting, dance and other fine arts. Poetry and literature have also been his favourite subjects. Urdu, Persian, English and German were his favourite languages. He very much liked Persian poetry. Shakespeare, Goethe, Saadi, Hafiz Urfi, Nazeer, Ghalib, Iqbal, Asgar and Jigar were some of his favourite writers and poets. Zakir Saheb himself composed poems. Two poems (Sher/ Couplets) written by him and his views on poetry can be read on page No. 586 of 'Shahide Justju' written by Prof. Ziaul Hasan Farooque.

Both these poems were located in a collection edited by Sher Anwar Sabri, titled 'The known and the unknown' (*Jaane Pehchane Aur Ve Jinhe Koi Nahin Janta*). For this Zakir Saheb wrote so on February 24, 1958:

"Creative work originating from the talent of man, lives longer than the writer himself. This is true of poems also. The true poets are forgotten but his poems are memorized by many which give pleasure as well as enlightenment too. Hazrat Sabri brought to light the unknown poets through their poems which are remembered. And Sabri Saheb has done an excellent job. Congratulations!" This is confirmed by this writing of Zakir Saheb. The following poem is by him:

*"Maanaa hujume dard bhi hai juzve zindagi,  
Purkaif Zindagi na sahi Zindagi to hai.  
Lillah uske zikr se nafrat na kijiye,  
Zakir Shakista haal sahi, aadmi to hai."*

## SIMPLICITY

Zakir Saheb's life has been an example of simplicity, good hobbies and orderliness. Even when he was not rich, he used to

put on clean clothes. He had started wearing Khadi during the days of Non-cooperative movement and maintained it all over his life — Aligarh cut payjamas and kurta of white khadi — sherwani and cap of the same cloth. He would generally put on white Sherwani in summer and coloured one in winter. The cloth, may be ordinary but always decent fit and graceful; always well-ironed sherwani and cap. Very few people would have seen him without a cap. Begum Sahiba would take care of his clothes. Is-haq took over this job after Zakir Saheb became Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University. He would keep the clothes ready and would hang the Sherwani after getting it ironed.

Zakir Saheb's simplicity had its full impact on his family members. His wife and daughters always lived with simplicity. When Zakir Saheb went to Aligarh as Vice-Chancellor, the people there were amazed at the simplicity of Zakir Saheb and his family.

The common man identified himself with Zakir Saheb because of his simplicity. He would meet everybody with great affection. He would mix with his employees and their children in simple and easy way and listen to their problems. He would call their children and give them sweets, clothes etc. If they were sick, he would himself go to them and arrange for their treatment.

## **POLITENESS AND MODESTY**

Zakir Saheb's politeness and modesty had a magnetic impact on everyone. Neighbours would praise him for his trait. He would address every visitor, educated, uneducated, rich or poor. The visitors would get impressed by his style. An old aunt had a lot of love and affection for Zakir Saheb. When he came to Jamia during his Vice-Chancellorship at Aligarh, she just made it a point to come with the support of a stick to see him. She would be gasping for breath. Feeling difficulty in walking, she would say, "Have not seen for long, I may die or live, let me have a glimpse of him". Once the aunt fell



ill. When Zakir Saheb came to know, he went to her room to enquire about her, sat by her side, talked and consoled her.

Once when Zakir Saheb was returned to Aligarh, he came to know at the station that a peon had expired. Zakir Saheb went straight from there to the peon's residence, and also to the burial place. He reached at 11 p.m. at night. The meal prepared at home was sent to the residence of the peon. And he himself did not take meal.

Even after his appointment as the President and Vice-President he continued to be polite and honest. In any function or festival, he would himself come forward to shake hands and enquire about people. When Zakir Saheb was President, he fell ill once and doctors advised him complete rest for a week. No movement was allowed. After a week when he was allowed to walk, the doctors took him to the Mughal Garden. It was finalised that he would walk a bit and will then sit down, will walk again and sit down. The same process will be repeated while returning. Zakir Saheb was a heart patient and the doctors wanted him not to suffer exhaustion. The doctor asked him very respectfully "Today you walked for the first time, still you kept walking, and did not rest. The chairs were kept on way for you to take rest." Zakir Saheb, replied, 'you tell me, how could I sit. Only three chairs were kept while we were four. Somebody, had to keep standing. I don't feel good in sitting while someone is standing.' At that time, the doctor, A.D.C. and the Garden-in-charges were accompanying Zakir Saheb.

Once a gentleman came to Zakir Saheb. He was then alone and had high fever. The visitor knocked at the door and getting no response walked straight to Zakir Saheb and sat down. The man told him about his poverty and asked for money. Zakir Saheb said, "I am not well. My wife is not here. At the moment I have no money with me." The visitor said, "whatever you are telling, must be correct. But now I have already asked for money." Zakir Saheb told him the name and address of his

secretary. He then came back with the secretary. Zakir Saheb asked his secretary to borrow money from somewhere and hand over to the gentleman.

Yet another example of Zakir Saheb's modesty is noteworthy. It happened when he suffered from Glaucoma for the first time. He was lying on bed with writhing pain in his eye. All the doors of the room were closed. Some of his friends were on guard. Meanwhile a person came from Punjab and expressed his desire to meet Zakir Saheb. He was told that Zakir Saheb was bed ridden. But he stuck to his request and said, "I have come far away from Punjab. Now I cannot go back without meeting Zakir Saheb." He started talking loudly. This led to dispute and noise. Zakir Saheb was told that someone had come to meet him and was insisting on this. Zakir Saheb said, "Call him inside". When friends disagreed, Zakir Saheb threatened to leave the bed and go out to talk to him if the visitor was not allowed to come in." Friends were helpless. The visitor was called inside.

When Zakir Saheb lived in Karol Bagh, purchases made from Subba Bania's shop were sometimes taken on credit. He was very good to Jamia people. He supplied articles on credit and would not even make demand for payment. He believed that the people in Jamia were good. Zakir Saheb did not forget the obligation of Subba Banias. After becoming President, Zakir Saheb got him located and called him; talked to him and as per his desire, Zakir Saheb got himself photographed with him. He gave as much respect as one gives to his beneficiary. He came out of his room and went up to his vehicle to leave him.

There was not the slightest touch of pride in him. He kept on bending like the tree laden with fruits. Modesty and politeness were characteristic of his personality. People calling on him never had a feeling that they are meeting some great man. Modesty and politeness were reflected in his personality as well as in his writings. He would always insist doing even petty jobs with style and principle and would say, if small things were set



right big ones would be done on their own. He also underlined the need for morality, gentility, nobility, humanity and modesty even in the play field.

## RELIGIOSITY AND HUMANITY

Zakir Saheb was a truly religious person. In his childhood, he spent a number of days with the noted Sufi Pir Buzurg Hasan Shah. He was also his disciple. He left a deep impact on Zakir Saheb's personality. Religiosity and devotion to God was fully integrated with his personality. He never wanted to impress this on anyone. Therefore he asked his daughter Sayeeda to stitch a cap that should completely cover his head. His purpose might have been that there should not be the mark of offering Namaz on his forehead and if there was any, that should not be visible to anyone. He never left the hold of religion by getting involved in worldliness. His views were very liberal in respect of religion. He read Quran Sharif a lot. He had also recordings of Quran Sharif which he must listen to at night after completing all work. Whenever he was troubled or had physical suffering, he used to be at peace after listening to Quran Sharif. He would be totally full of emotions after reading or listening to some parts of it. He had full faith in God. He had formed it his habit to work according to His desire.

In the last phase of his life, Zakir Saheb had scanty sleep at night. Sometimes he would keep wide awake for the whole night, would read books, read Quran Sharif and offer Namaz. He would not let his prayers known to others. While shouldering all the responsibilities of worldliness, he spent his night in the prayer to the Almighty exactly in the lines of Hazrat Amir Khusro. While alone he would actually experience proximity to God. Nobody could even imagine that the person holding such high offices, is also spiritually so high.

His religiosity, was aimed at integrating human relations, take them forward, and was free from fundamentalism and

superstition. He visualised the image of God in His Creation. He was not seeking his heaven, away from the world. He craved for a heaven, which was for all. He considered Islam as the religion of the whole humanity. He said, "There is immense possibility in Islam to take forward the human life and take it high."

The special trait of Zakir Saheb's personality was that he could not stand the sight of anybody sad. He could not accept tears in anybody's eyes. In Aligarh, it was widely known — 'Go and weep before Zakir Saheb, your work will be done.' This weakness was even exploited. Students would come to him in old torn clothes, with a weeping face. He considered winning over somebody's heart as the most righteous action or the greatest pilgrimage, so he used to satisfy every needy person coming to him. He was very compassionate. Compassion is regarded as a great gift of God. This is the privilege of the fortunate ones. Zakir Saheb was very cautious in ensuring that his deeds did not hurt anybody. He took great care of animals and birds. He never taught the students in a way that would hurt them. He treated them with sympathy and mercy. One gentleman lived in the neighbourhood of Zakir Sahab in Karol Bagh. He borrowed a few cane-stools from Zakir Saheb. Then he came and asked for the chairs also. When labourers came to take away the chairs, Mujeeb Saheb told the gentleman, "won't you leave something for Zakir Saheb". The gentleman left but Zakir Sahab turned pallid and could just say, "Oh, Mujeeb Saheb, what have you done!"

Zakir Saheb had sense of service to others right from childhood. In the beginning, he rendered great service to his guru Hasan Shah. He had great respect for saints and elderly people. He had also great respect for an elderly person Azad Subhani. He always helped the helpless widows and orphans. He was always interested in imparting education to them. Whether he was in Aligarh or Jamia, Patna or Delhi, he kept rendering his services to others.



## RESPECT FOR OTHERS

In 1943, Zakir Saheb was appointed a member of the Sunni Waqf Board. He paid special attention to the orphanage (yatim-khana) of Dariyaganj. On his suggestion the name of the orphanage was changed from Yatim-khana to 'Bachchon ka Ghar' (children's home). He said the name Children's Home will make children feel at home. They won't feel that they are living in some orphanage. He gave special attention to the living condition of children and the food that was served to them. He stopped the practice of children taking meals by going to somebody's place. According to him, this practice hurts the respect of children. He said "children should not be given discarded clothes of others to put on. And the clothes stitched for them should not give the impression that they are orphans. Children should not be sent to collect donations. The workers of the institution should take special care to ensure that the children should not feel that they are orphans."

These suggestions of Zakir Saheb were implemented. Even today children live in their home at Daryaganj with great respect.

Zakir Saheb had great respect for the elderly people. He always mentioned the name of Gandhiji and Hakim Ajmal Khan with great respect. Zakir Saheb was influenced by both of them in his life. About Ajmal Khan, Zakir Saheb used to say, "Hakim Ajmal was one of those great persons, who become greater when at close proximity. Those who see these great persons from distance, respect them, but those who see him from near get attached. Those who have links with one generation, pass away, but those who have links with both past and future, are immortal and Ajmal Khan is among those immortals." In other words, the same can be said about Zakir Saheb.

Zakir Saheb had great respect for teachers. When Zakir Saheb became President and received so many congratulatory letters, he treated these felicitations as a mark of respect for a teacher and not his own. Zakir Saheb gave great respect to his

teachers. After becoming Vice chancellor in Aligarh, he on the request of the Vice-chancellor of Agra University went for inspection of the classes there. When he went to a class, he happened to see a teacher absorbed in teaching. Zakir Saheb felt ashamed. He sought apology and said, "If I knew you were teaching, I would have never come inside." He did not inspect that class. That teacher had been Zakir Saheb's teacher also. He always regarded the teachers great and paid much respect to them. He always gave much importance to gaining knowledge. Knowledge is acquired from a teacher. So his respect is essential.

The facts of Zakir Saheb's personality are so many that words alone cannot do justice to him. He had said that man's first home is mother's lap. As he grows up, the circle of his home also extends and finally entirely the whole world. The whole world is his home. After becoming President, he had said while addressing the countrymen, "The whole India is my home and those living here my family." At the end, only this much can be said that a person like Zakir Saheb is born only after centuries—

*"Hazon Saal Nargis Apni Benuri pe Rota Hai  
Badi Mushkil se Hota Hai Chaman Mein Didawar Paida".*









## **Dr. ZAKIR HUSSAIN**

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